

Why routine vaccinations for kids are especially important this year

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The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in children missing months of wellness visits. And that means missing routine vaccinations. Some parents may not be aware that their children are behind on their vaccinations. Mayo Clinic, along with other health care organizations, is

working hard to make parents aware that their children are due vaccinations and deliver those vaccinations that children need.

Dr. Robert Jacobson, a Mayo Clinic pediatrician, says it's happening all over the country. The state of Minnesota, for example, is 65,000 doses behind for vaccinations given to children 11-12 years old and 46,000 doses behind for vaccinations given to children 4-6 years old, according to the latest Got Your Shots newsletter.

"That means we're developing pockets of reduced immunity for these vaccine-preventable diseases. That means those outbreaks are more likely to spread because of that decreased herd immunity," says Dr. Jacobson.

One vaccination that will be especially important for kids to get during the COVID-19 pandemic is the influenza vaccination.

"We have this range of early symptoms with COVID-19 and flu that look very similar, though the diseases may end up behaving very differently," says Dr. Jacobson. "We've got to do everything we can to prevent that confusion. And, right now, we can, with the flu, prevent it by getting the flu vaccine. And not just our children, but every one of us—every one of us in the household."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends everyone 6 months and older get the flu vaccination every season.

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