



The Continued Importance of Routine Vaccinations for Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic Whenever Possible

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In [guidance](#) provided in April, the AAP emphasized the importance of continued well-child care “whenever possible.” Acknowledging that extensive community transmission of COVID-19 may limit provider capacity for well-child visits, recommendations included prioritization of continued in-person well-child care and immunizations for newborns through 24 months of age whenever possible. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, the need to develop capacity and structured processes to continue the delivery of well-child care in an alternative and safe way has become increasingly apparent. The anticipated prolonged duration of the pandemic’s spread and potential for increased surges again this fall and winter call for a reconsideration of how to keep children up-to-date on the routine vaccinations that protect them from communicable diseases with considerable morbidity and mortality. As we hopefully draw closer to the reopening of childcare centers and schools, it is additionally important to ensure children remain up-to-date on immunizations in order to:

1. be protected from disease
2. help provide protection to those who are immunocompromised or have other contraindications to receiving vaccinations
3. limit additional outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases that would further burden an already stressed healthcare system
4. be eligible for attendance under California law SB-277.

[Suggestions of alternative delivery strategies](#) to prioritize these goals have included scheduling well-child visits in the morning and sick visits in the afternoon, assigning staff to identify patients who are behind on vaccinations and contacting families to schedule appointments, and using telehealth to increase capacity when appropriate. The [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#) has additionally provided guidance on maintaining childhood vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we continue to learn and adapt during this unprecedented time, we hope to reach out to AAP Chapter 2 members to solicit ideas on how to improve well-child care and immunization delivery as well as garner thoughts on anticipated practice needs should the demand for a mass vaccination campaign arise with the development of a COVID-19 vaccine in the future.