tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization

WhyImmunize.org

Vaccination Toolkit for Community Health Workers

October 2026











tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization

WhyImmunize.org

About the Vaccination Toolkit

This toolkit was created to help **Community Health Workers** (CHWs) quickly find **trusted, easy-to-use vaccination resources**—all in one place and right at your fingertips. Whether you are educating a client, answering questions, addressing vaccine concerns, connecting families to services, or looking for culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, this toolkit is here to support your work.

Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to prevent serious illness and protect our communities. **Arizona's childhood vaccination coverage is currently below the level needed for strong community protection**, making the role of CHWs especially important.

Use this toolkit to:

- Find trusted vaccine information and educational materials
- Support conversations with clients and families
- Connect individuals with vaccination services and resources
- Access Arizona-specific immunization information
- Help communities stay informed and protected

Thank you for being a trusted source of health information in your community!



We welcome your feedback. Please email comments to TAPIAdmin@tapi.org.

Vaccine Basics | Managing Concerns | Getting Vaccinated | Questions & Answers | Shareable Resources

Vaccine Basics

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

What is a vaccine?

A vaccine is a medical treatment designed to keep you healthy. **A vaccine trains your body to defend itself** against a particular disease, before you even encounter that disease.



A vaccine is kind of like a "wanted poster." Getting vaccinated shows your body's natural defenses (your "immune system") a mug shot of a dangerous germ. If that exact germ ever gets into your body, your immune system quickly recognizes the intruder and fights it off.



How do vaccines work?

Most vaccines use a weakened germ, a dead germ, or even just part of a germ (an "antigen"). An antigen can't make you sick, but it does **activate your immune system**.

Your immune system then **makes proteins (or "antibodies")** that are **perfectly shaped to attack that exact germ**. Your body also makes "memory cells" that circulate in your body and remember that same germ.

If you're infected with a live version of the germ later, your memory cells quickly **produce the right shape of antibodies to fight off the germ**.

Learn more about how vaccines work from the **University of Florida** or by watching a short video from the **Oxford Vaccine Group**.

Vaccine Basics

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org



Why vaccinate?

Vaccines help strengthen your protection against serious diseases. Some diseases, like the flu or chickenpox, may be familiar to you. Others, like polio, are now rarely seen in the United States because vaccines have been so successful. However, these diseases haven't disappeared and can still cause serious illness. **If we stop vaccinating, these diseases will return**.

Learn more about vaccine-preventable diseases in **English from TAPI** or in **Spanish from Vaccinate Your Family**.

What is community immunity?

Some people in your area can't be vaccinated. Infants, older adults, and people with weak immune systems may fall into this category. They **rely on having enough immunized people** around them to **shield them from disease**. This protection is known as "community immunity." When you get your shots, you add to community immunity.



Bottom line

- When you're **vaccinated**, you're **far less likely to become seriously ill**.
- You're also **contributing to the community immunity** that **protects people** who can't be vaccinated.

Managing Concerns

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Conversation Tips

Listen with empathy

Let your clients know that you hear them and that you care about what's on their mind. You don't have to agree with them to acknowledge how they feel.

"I can understand why this is on your mind."
"It's good to ask questions. I've had questions about vaccines, too."

Stay curious

Ask questions to invite more sharing & to clarify concerns.

"Can you tell me more?"
"Why do you feel that way?"

Give them credit for their effort

"I can tell you really care about your health."
"It's clear you've put a lot of thought into this."

Ask permission to share

Get your clients' permission before you share vaccine information. This helps them feel in control.

"Can I share something I've learned?"
"Is it okay if I send you some resources on that?"

Share trusted information

Share what you've learned about vaccines. If you don't have an answer, offer to help look for reliable information —and then follow up, once you've found it.

Share your perspective

You can share why you got shots for yourself or your child. You can share your vaccination experiences. Your stories and perspective matter.

*Access a **CHW vaccine communication toolkit**, available in 9 different languages, from the Washington State Department of Health.*

Managing Concerns

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Vaccine Side Effects

Like any medicine, vaccines can cause side effects. Most are mild, like soreness where you received the shot or feeling tired the next day. This is **part of your body's response** as it learns to recognize and defend against the disease, **building immunity.**

A vaccine cannot give you the disease it protects against.

The American Academy of Pediatrics provides **immunization fact sheets in English and Spanish**. You can also read Vaccine Information Statements on **Immunize.org** or learn more about side effects from **Let's Get Real About Vaccines**.





Some clients may be concerned about serious side effects. Take time to listen to their concerns. If they're willing to let you share, help them understand that **serious side effects are very rare** (for example, for every 1 million shots given, only 1 or 2 serious allergic reactions follow).

Remember that **considering risks also involves weighing the risks of the diseases** that vaccines protect against. You can learn more about weighing risks from **Let's Get Real About Vaccines**.

Managing Concerns

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Autism and Vaccines

Vaccines do not cause autism.



Scientists have been **studying the subject for over 20 years**. They've looked at **vaccines, vaccine ingredients** (including thimerosal), and the **number of vaccines** given to young children. **None of these things are linked to autism**.

So **why do some people believe** there is a connection? In 1998, a researcher named **Andrew Wakefield** suggested that the MMR vaccine caused the developmental backslide of 8 children. His suggestion was **disproven by dozens of studies** that involved hundreds of thousands of kids. He **lost his medical license**.



What does cause autism? Current evidence tell us that autism is complex—**there's not a single cause**. We know that autism disorders are **highly genetic**. Autism runs in families. Many **other factors may play a role**. Scientists are studying these factors.

You can learn more from **Autism Speaks**, the **Autism Science Foundation**, or the **Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center**.

Managing Concerns

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Measles and the MMR Vaccine

Arizona is facing a **measles outbreak** that started in the summer of 2025. **Almost everyone** who's **gotten measles** during the outbreak has been **unvaccinated**.



Measles is **highly contagious**: 9 out of 10 unvaccinated people who are exposed to the disease will get sick. Measles **spreads** when an **infected person breathes**, **coughs**, or **sneezes**. The virus can **stay in the air** and on **infected surfaces** for up to **2 hours**.

The **measles vaccine** provides you with **strong protection**. **Two doses** of the **MMR vaccine** are **97% effective** at preventing measles infection.



Only 87% of **Arizona's kindergartners** were **vaccinated against measles** during the most recent 2025–2026 school year. This is **below** the 95% **immunization level** needed to maintain **community immunity**.

Measles **symptoms** include a **fever**, **cough**, **runny nose**, and **red, watery eyes**. A **rash** appears 3–5 days after the first symptoms.

Measles is a **serious disease**—it can cause **ear infections**, **diarrhea**, **pneumonia**, **deafness**, **brain swelling**, and sometimes even **death**. Measles can also cause **immune amnesia**; this means that a person's **immune system forgets** how to **fight off** harmful **infections**.

Learn about measles from American Academy of Pediatrics in **English** or **Spanish**, and get the **latest measles updates** from the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Managing Concerns

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

HPV Vaccine

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus. **Most people get infected with HPV** at some point in their lives. **Some types (or "strains")** of the HPV virus are **particularly dangerous**, because they **can lead to cancer**. The HPV vaccine protects against 9 of these dangerous strains. **HPV vaccination prevents cancer**.



The HPV vaccine is **most effective when it is given in the preteen years**. Preteens produce more antibodies after HPV vaccination than older adolescents do. That's why kids who start the HPV vaccine series between **ages 9-14 only need 2 doses**. Older teens and young adults who start at **ages 15-26 require 3 doses**.



Starting the vaccine early also ensures that children are **protected before they are exposed to the virus**.

HPV can be spread through genital contact and sexual activity. However, research shows that **HPV vaccination does not lead to earlier sexual activity in teens**. Research also shows **no link between HPV vaccination and infertility**.

You can watch a short video from the **American Academy of Pediatrics**, or read more from the **CDC** or the **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia**.

Managing Concerns

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

mRNA Vaccine Technology

mRNA vaccines have been **studied and tested** for **over 30 years**. The **COVID-19 vaccine** is the **best-known** mRNA vaccine—but it's **not the only one**. An **mRNA flu shot** will be available for adults ages 50 and older, starting during the 2026–2027 flu season.



Most vaccine scientists believe that **mRNA vaccines** are the **future**. So, **how do mRNA vaccines work**?

Every person has mRNA in their cells. mRNA is a **set of instructions** that guides your body to **make proteins**. An **mRNA vaccine teaches your body** to **make a specific protein** for only a short time. The protein **looks like a small part of a germ**—this is an "antigen." Just like with other types of vaccines, this antigen **can't make you sick**, but it ***does* activate your immune system**.



Your **immune system responds** to the antigen by **building defenses against the germ**. The **mRNA has done its job**, and your **body naturally breaks it down**; it does not change your DNA. Then later, if you're exposed to the live germ, **your immune system remembers** the germ and can **respond quickly** to **help protect you** from getting sick.

Learn more about how mRNA vaccines work by watching a short video from **PBS News Hour** or a video from the **Vaccine Makers Project**.

mRNA cancer vaccines are being **tested in the US**. They're achieving **good results** in preventing cancer from returning. Learn about mRNA cancer vaccines from the **American Cancer Society** or by watching a short video from **Nature Magazine**.

Managing Concerns

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Cultural & Religious Concerns

Cultural values and religious beliefs can **shape how people view** health, medicine, and disease prevention—including **vaccines**. **Most religious groups support immunization** because it helps protect people and their communities.



Still, some people have **continuing concerns** about vaccine ingredients or medical interventions.

Understanding these concerns and **respectfully acknowledging** how your clients feel can open the door to **more conversation**.



Continue the discussion by **staying curious**, **acknowledging** clients' **health efforts**, and **asking permission** before you share vaccine information and perspectives.

Learn what religious organizations say about vaccines from **TAPI**.

Gather **resources** to address religious concerns from **Immunize.org**.

The History of Vaccines also covers **faith perspectives on vaccination**.

Managing Concerns

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Mistrust in Health Systems

When people have **confidence** in their **doctors**, they're **more likely to accept vaccines**. On the other hand, when people mistrust their providers or health institutions, they're less likely to be vaccinated.

Individual **reasons for mistrust can run deep**—they include historical trauma, discrimination, mistreatment, and fear of government overreach.





There are **no shortcuts** to **rebuilding trust**. However, as community members and trusted messengers, **you're uniquely positioned to help**.

When you **support clients** by **listening** with empathy, **advocating** for their needs, **encouraging** preventative care, and **helping** them navigate the health system, **trust grows**. **Every conversation** is an **opportunity to make a difference**.

Learn more about building trust to increase vaccine confidence from the **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia**.

Getting Vaccinated

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Immunization Records

Arizona residents can **access** their **official immunization records** for **free** on the **MyIR Mobile portal**. These records can be printed and used to fulfill childcare, school, and work requirements. Learn more from the **Arizona Department of Health Services**, or go directly to Arizona's **MyIR Mobile** account registration page.



If you're looking for **immunization records from another location**, check out these **tips for finding vaccine records** from Immunize.org.



Childcare & School Requirements

Arizona **requires children** to be **immunized** to attend **childcare**, **preschool**, and **school grades K-12**. Learn more from the Arizona Department of Health Services:

- **Childcare and Preschool**: Guide to Immunizations Required for Entry – **English** | **Spanish**
- **School Grades K-12**: Guide to Immunizations Required for Entry – **English** | **Spanish**

Getting Vaccinated

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Immunization Schedules



Key Messages

- Vaccines are still available.
- Vaccines are still no-cost for most families.
- The science has not changed.
- The diseases are still around.

Children and Adolescents

- **2026 Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule** (18 Years or Younger): American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- **Patient Handout**: AAP 2026 Recommended Immunization Schedule (Birth through 6 Years Old): healthychildren.org – **English** | **Spanish**
- **Patient Handout**: AAP 2026 Recommended Immunization Schedule (7 through 18 Years Old) healthychildren.org – **English** | **Spanish**

Adults (19 Years and Older)

- **2026 Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule** (19 Years or Older): American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
- **Patient Handout**: AAFP 2026 Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule (19 Years or Older): familydoctor.org – **English**

Pregnant, Postpartum, & Lactating Patients

- **2026 Maternal Immunization Schedule**: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
- **Patient Handout**: ACOG 2026 Maternal Immunization Schedule – **English**

Getting Vaccinated

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Where to Get Vaccinated

Get help finding **vaccination locations** from The Arizona Partnership for Immunization. Keep reading to find **low or no cost immunization options** and clinics that offer **travel vaccines**.

Vaccines for Children Program



The Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program offers **free vaccines for children**, ages 18 or younger, who are **uninsured**, **underinsured**, **eligible for Medicaid** (AHCCCS), or who are **American Indian** or **Alaska Native**. Parents can learn how to use the VFC program from the **CDC**.

Access a **directory and map of Arizona's VFC providers** from the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS).

Note that **VFC coverage** for **underinsured children** is **limited to certain providers**. ADHS maintains a list of **qualified VFC providers for underinsured children**.



Community Health Centers

Community Health Centers provide **affordable** healthcare services, including **vaccinations**. Uninsured and underinsured patients with **limited income** are offered **discounted rates** through a sliding fee schedule. **Find a Community Health Center** through the Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers.

Getting Vaccinated

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

County Health Department Immunization Clinics

Visit the links below to learn about your county health department's **low or no cost immunization services**. A few county clinics also offer fee-based travel vaccines.

- Apache
- Cochise
- Coconino
- Gila
- Graham
- Greenlee
- La Paz
- Maricopa
- Mohave
- Navajo
- Pima
- Pinal
- Santa Cruz
- Yavapai
- Yuma

Clinics in Maricopa County

In Maricopa County, three **immunization clinics** offer **free childhood vaccines** to **those who qualify** and some adult vaccines. Use the links below to review eligibility and clinic schedules.

- Dignity Health (Child and Adult Vaccines)
- Mesa Fire Department (Child Vaccines Only)
- Phoenix Fire Department (Child and Adult Vaccines)

Getting Vaccinated

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Travel Vaccines

People who are **traveling abroad** may need **travel vaccines** to **protect** their **health**. The CDC outlines country-specific **vaccination recommendations and entry requirements**. The CDC also maintains a directory of **authorized yellow fever vaccination clinics**.



The CDC recommends that you **meet with your doctor or travel clinic** at least **4-6 weeks before your departure**. Arizona clinics that provide **travel consults and vaccinations** include **Concentra**, **Passport Health**, and **TravelBug Health**. Some travel vaccines may be available at **pharmacies**; call your pharmacy to find out which they carry and whether you'll need a prescription from your doctor. A few county health departments offer fee-based travel vaccines.

Transportation Resources

Medicaid (AHCCCS) members who do not have transportation (or the ability to arrange transportation) are **eligible for transportation assistance** to **Medicaid-covered health services, including immunization**. You can request either a public transportation pass (for the bus or light rail) or a ride in a non-emergency medical transportation vehicle. Learn more from AHCCCS:

- **Public Transportation Pass:** English | Spanish
- **Non-Emergency Medical Transport**: English | Spanish

Questions & Answers

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

"My baby is so small. I'm worried that all these vaccines are too much for his little body."

- Vaccines are **carefully tested** for babies of every size. The **doses** are **small and safe**, and healthcare providers are trained to **give them gently**.
- Think of it like wearing a **tiny life jacket**—just a little protection keeps them **safe in big situations**.





"Every time I get the flu shot, I get sick."

- The flu shot helps your body fight the flu safely—getting **mild side effects** is a **sign** your immune system is **responding**, not that you're actually sick.
- Just like muscles feel sore after a workout, your body is **'training'** to **fight the flu**.

Questions & Answers

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org



"I'm concerned about vaccines and autism."

- Let's look at it **together** so you can feel **comfortable** making an **informed decision** for your child.
- This question has been **studied extensively**, including in research that investigated the **MMR vaccine** and **vaccine ingredients**.
- We know from **dozens of studies** that **vaccines do not cause autism**. There's **no link** between **vaccines** and **developmental delays.**

"I don't trust how fast the COVID vaccine came out."

- Scientists didn't start from scratch—they've been **studying similar coronaviruses for years**.
- The trials included **tens of thousands of people** and followed the **same safety rules** as other vaccines.
- Manufacturing and approvals were **faster** because of **urgent need** and global collaboration—**not because safety was skipped**.
- The vaccine **protects** against **serious illness**, **hospitalization**, and **long-term complications**.



Questions & Answers

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

"I've heard that vaccines have aluminum & other chemicals."

- The **small amount of aluminum** in vaccines helps your child's body **build a strong immune response**. **Without it**, vaccines **wouldn't work as well** to protect your child from serious diseases.
- The amount of **aluminum** in vaccines is **much smaller** than what babies get naturally from **breast milk, formula**, or even some foods.





Read more Q&As from **TAPI**.

"My teen isn't having sex, so why does she need to vaccinate against HPV?"

- It's **natural to wonder** why your teen needs the HPV vaccine.
- The reason we recommend the **HPV vaccine** at this age is because it provides the **strongest protection** when given **before exposure** to HPV.
- The **HPV vaccine** is a **cancer-prevention vaccine**. Getting it now means your teen can have **protection** in place **long before HPV** could become a **concern**.

Shareable Resources

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Trusted Social Media Messengers

Social media is filled with **messages about vaccines**. It can be hard to know **who to trust**. We **recommend** these trusted social media accounts. We encourage you to **follow and share!**

English Language Social Media

- **Trusted Pediatricians on Social Media**
- **Immunization Playlist**
- **Vaccinative: Vaccine Information for Natives by Natives**

Spanish Language Social Media

Ilan Shapiro, MD

- **@DrShaps**
- **@dr_shaps**

Rogelio Robles-Morales, MD, PhD

- **@oncogineson**
- **@dr.rogelio.robles**

El Beacon (Bilingual Spanish & English)

- **@elbeaconcomunidad**
- **@elbeaconcomunidad**



Shareable Resources

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Printable Handouts

Anxiety

Addressing Vaccination Anxiety for Infants & Toddlers:
Immunize.org – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**

Addressing Vaccination Anxiety for Children:
Immunize.org – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**

Addressing Vaccination Anxiety in Adolescents & Adults:
Immunize.org – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**

Autism

Evidence Shows Vaccines Unrelated to Autism:
Immunize.org – Handout in **English**

Facts About Autism and Vaccines:
Autism Society – Flyer in **English** | **"Plain Language" English**

Vaccines & Autism: What You Should Know:
CHOP – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**

CHW Tools

Immunization Education Screening Tool:
TAPI – CHW Screening Tool in English | Spanish

COVID-19

How mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Work:
CDC – Flyer in **English**

How Protein Subunit COVID-19 Vaccines Work:
CDC – Flyer in **English**

COVID-19 Vaccines: What You Should Know:
CHOP – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**

Diseases

Vaccine Preventable Diseases:
TAPI – Poster in **English & Spanish (Bilingual)**

Vaccines Work!:
Immunize.org – Handout in **English**

Shareable Resources

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Printable Handouts

Flu

A Strong Defense Against Flu: Get Vaccinated!:
CDC – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**

Influenza: What You Should Know:
CHOP – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**

Not Sure If You Can Get an Influenza Vaccine?:
Immunize.org – Handout in **English**

People 65 Years and Older Need a Flu Shot:
CDC – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**

HPV

Benefits of the HPV Vaccine:
TAPI – Flyer in **English & Spanish (Bilingual)**

Human Papillomavirus: A Parent's Guide to Preteen and Teen HPV Vaccination: Immunize.org – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**

HPV Vaccine: A Guide for Adults Ages 18–26 Years:
Immunize.org – Handout in **English**

Human Papillomavirus: What You Should Know:
CHOP – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**

Prevention Matters!:
American Cancer Society – Flyer in **English** | **Spanish**

Measles

How to Spot Measles:
TAPI – Flyer in **English**

Measles in Your Community:
TAPI – Flyer in **English & Spanish (Bilingual)**

Measles: What You Should Know:
CHOP – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**

Sample Community Letter About Measles:
Sample Letter in **English**

Shareable Resources

tapi The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
WhyImmunize.org

Printable Handouts

Misleading Health Claims	**How to Spot Misleading Health Claims**: AAP – Handout in **English**
Native Resources	**Vaccinative:** Vaccination Information for Natives by Natives: **All Printables** or **By Topic**
Record Keeping	**Tips for Locating Old Immunization Records**: Immunize.org – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**
Respiratory Viruses	**Protect Yourself & Your Family: Respiratory Illnesses:** TAPI – Flyer in **English & Spanish (Bilingual)** **Respiratory Virus Immunization Recommendations:** AMA – Handout in **English**
Social Media	**Trusted Social Media Messengers**: American Academy of Pediatrics – **Flyer** | **QR Codes**
Vaccine Facts	**Immunization Facts for Families:** AAP – Fact Sheets in **English & Spanish** **What is a Vaccine?:** TAPI – Flyer in **English & Spanish (Bilingual)**
Vaccine Safety	**Vaccinations are Safe: Explaining Why**: Immunize.org – Handout in **English**
Why Vaccinate	**Top Ten Reasons to Protect Your Child by Vaccinating**: Immunize.org – Handout in **English** | **Spanish**