Why vaccinate against rotavirus?

- Rotavirus is very contagious. Before there was a vaccine, rotavirus was very common. Infection is especially dangerous for babies and young children under age 5 years. It causes
  - Vomiting.
  - Diarrhea (sometimes severe).
  - Fever.
- Rotavirus illness can lead to
  - Severe dehydration.
  - Hospitalization.
  - Death.
- Rotavirus vaccination strengthens your child’s immune system so they can avoid severe infection.
- Rotavirus vaccination is the best way to protect young children.

How does rotavirus spread?

- Rotavirus commonly spreads in families, hospitals and child care centers.
- The virus is in the stool of people who are infected.
  - Rotavirus can live on surfaces or objects for several days. It is very difficult to stop its spread just by handwashing or disinfecting surfaces.
  - A child can get rotavirus from touching an object with rotavirus on it and putting hands in their mouth or by consuming food or drinks prepared by someone with the infection.

Rotavirus vaccine

- Rotavirus vaccine is routinely recommended for newborns and infants.
- It is a live, oral vaccine.
- Children should receive 2 or 3 doses of rotavirus vaccine, depending on which vaccine brand is used. Vaccination is recommended at the following ages:
  - 2 months.
  - 4 months.
  - 6 months (if a third dose is required).
- A child must get the first dose of rotavirus vaccine before age 15 weeks and the last before age 8 months.
- If they do not receive the recommended doses of vaccine by age 8 months, they cannot get caught up later.

After vaccination

- Side effects usually are mild and go away on their own. They include
  - Irritability.
  - Mild, temporary diarrhea or vomiting.
  - More serious but rare side effects include a small increased risk of intussusception (blocked bowel) within a week after the first or second rotavirus vaccine dose. Intussusception, unrelated to the vaccine, happens in some babies in the United States. The additional risk of intussusception after rotavirus vaccine ranges from 1 in 20,000 to 1 in 100,000 U.S. infants. The benefits of the rotavirus vaccine in preventing severe disease and hospitalization are far greater than the small increase in risk for intussusception.