

Childhood Vaccinations

We are often asked about the schedule for childhood vaccinations so that parents can research the illnesses and make choices for their children about immunizations.

With the exception of Hepatitis B, which is given to newborn babies at high risk of contracting this virus, no vaccines are given within the first six weeks.

Whether or not to vaccinate your child is a discussion you should have with your family doctor.

Routine Schedule: all these vaccines are covered by OHIP

2 months, 4 months, and 6 months:

Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio (*DTaP-IPV*);
Haemophilus influenza (*Hib*);
Pneumococcal disease (*Pneu-C-7*)

12 months: Measles, Mumps, Rubella (*MMR*),
Meningococcal disease (*MenC*)

15 months: Pneumococcal disease (*Pneu-C-7*),
Varicella (chicken pox) (*Var*)

18 months: Booster shots for Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio (*DTaP-IPV*);
Haemophilus influenza (*Hib*); Measles, Mumps, Rubella (*MMR*),

4-6 years: Booster shots for Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio (*DTaP-IPV*);

Grade 7: Hepatitis B (*HB*);
Booster for Meningococcal disease (*MenC*)

Grade 8 girls: Human papillomavirus (*HPV*)

14-16 years: Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (*Tdap – adolescent, adult formulation*)

Every 10 years after: Tetanus, Diphtheria (*Td – adult formulation*)

Every autumn: Influenza

What are the Illnesses

Vaccines have been developed to induce immunity against viruses and bacteria which are contagious and can have serious harmful effects.

- **Haemophilus Influenzae B (HIB)** is a bacteria that can infect any part of the body. It can cause middle ear infections, breathing problems, damage to joints, pneumonia (lung infection), inflammation of the brain leading to brain damage and death. This vaccine recommended for children less than 5 years of age.
- **Pneumococcal disease** is a bacterial infection that can cause serious illnesses such as pneumonia, blood infection and meningitis. The pneumococcal conjugate vaccine is now available free of charge in Ontario for the routine immunization of children less than 2 years old as well as high-risk children 2 to 59 months of age.
- **Diphtheria** is a very serious bacterial infection. It can cause breathing problems, heart failure, nerve damage and death in about 10% of cases.
- **Tetanus (Lockjaw)** causes painful muscle spasms, breathing failure and can lead to death. It is caused by bacteria and spores in the soil that can infect wounds.

- **Polio** can cause paralysis (loss of control over muscles in the body), inflammation of the brain and death. People get polio from drinking water or eating food with the polio virus in it. It is no longer common in Canada because of high immunization rates, but cases do occur elsewhere in the world and polio may be acquired when traveling if you are not fully immunized.
- **Pertussis** (Whooping Cough) causes severe coughing spells for weeks or months. It can also cause pneumonia (lung infection), middle ear infection, convulsions (seizures), inflammation of the brain and death. The risk of complications is greatest in children younger than one year of age.
- **Measles** causes rash, high fever, cough, runny nose and watery eyes. It can cause middle ear infection, pneumonia (lung infection), inflammation of the brain, hearing loss, brain damage and death.
- **Mumps** causes fever, headache, painful swelling of the glands in the mouth and neck, earache and can cause inflammation of the brain. It can cause temporary or permanent deafness and swelling of the ovaries in women and testes in men, possibly leading to sterility.
- **Rubella** (German Measles) causes fever, rash, swelling of the neck glands and swelling and pain in the joints. It can cause bruising and bleeding. If a pregnant woman gets rubella, it can be very dangerous for the unborn baby.
- **Meningococcal disease-group C** is a very serious bacterial infection and a common cause of meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and meningococcaemia (severe infection of the blood) that can cause severe complications and death.
- **Varicella** (Chicken pox) is a highly contagious viral infection. It can cause fever, headache, chills, muscle or joint aches a day or two before the itchy, red rash appears. A pregnant woman with chicken pox can pass it on to her unborn baby. Mothers with chicken pox can also give it to their newborn baby after birth. Chicken pox can be very severe or even life-threatening to newborn babies.
- **Hepatitis B** is a virus that can cause serious liver problems that can be fatal, such as liver failure and liver cancer. The vaccine is free for grade 7 students and certain high-risk groups (including infants born to mothers who are infected with hepatitis B and can pass the disease on to their babies).
- **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)** is a very common virus transmitted through sexual activity. HPV has been found to cause cervical cancer, some other rare cancers and genital warts. (About 75 per cent of adults will have at least one HPV infection in their lifetime.) The vaccine is free for grade 8 females.
- **Influenza** is a viral infection that causes cough, high fever, chills, headache and muscle pain. It can cause pneumonia (infection of the lungs), middle ear infections, heart failure and death. The danger of this infection varies from year to year depending on the strain and can be mild to life-threatening. Any one six months of age and older who lives, works or attends school in Ontario can get the vaccine each year free of charge.

Vaccines against the following diseases are recommended for younger children. These vaccines are available free of charge:

Haemophilus Influenzae B (HIB), Pneumococcal disease

Vaccines that protect against the following diseases are available free of charge, and are required for attendance at school (unless there is a valid written exemption):

Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella

Vaccines against the following diseases are recommended but not required for attendance at school. These vaccines are available free of charge:

Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Hepatitis B, Influenza, Varicella (Chicken pox), Meningococcal disease, Human papillomavirus (HPV)

It is important to keep an immunization record.

Get a yellow immunization card from your doctor, nurse practitioner or local public health unit to keep a record of the shots you and your child have received. An up-to-date immunization record will prevent unnecessary extra shots. Written immunization records are needed when:

- starting child care or school,
- transferring to a school in another area,
- going to camp,
- starting university, college or a job,
- receiving emergency health care,
- traveling to other countries.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide immunization records for all school children to the local public health unit. Don't forget to update the health unit when/if your child gets another shot.

Reference: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/immun/immunization.html>