



CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION



Immunisation protects babies, children and adults from serious illnesses. These illnesses often spread quickly and can break out at any time (epidemics). Epidemics endanger the health and lives of people who have not been immunised. Immunising a child not only protects that child but other children as well, by increasing the general level of immunity and decreasing the spread of infection.

HOW IMMUNISATION WORKS

Immunisation helps your body to develop antibodies (disease fighting substances) which destroy bacteria and viruses before they cause illness.

WHO, WHEN AND WHERE?

Everyone needs diphtheria, polio, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, mumps and rubella immunisation. Young children need Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b) immunisation. These basic childhood vaccinations are usually free of charge and are available from your doctor, community health centre or local council clinic.

In addition to the basic childhood immunisation, all children between 10-16 years of age should be immunised against hepatitis B. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

recommends the use of hepatitis B vaccine for all

LATE STARTERS

When immunisation is not started on time, or doses have been missed, a new program can be worked out.

REACTIONS

Immunisation injections sometimes cause reactions (ask your doctor). These are usually mild and include:

- a slight fever
- a sore arm
- feeling a little unwell

The NHMRC recommends the use of paracetamol to minimise these mild side effects. If used, paracetamol should be given within a 30 minute period before an immunisation injection and may be repeated up to every 4 hours after immunisation, according to the need for fever or pain relief.

The risk of a severe reaction to immunisation is small but the risks of not being immunised are very serious.

KEEP A RECORD

Record each immunisation in the basic program on a card available from your doctor or State Health department. You may need to show this card when your child starts school.

Also record hepatitis B, influenza and tetanus immunisation as well as vaccines before overseas travel. Fill in the chart on the back of this card as your own reminder.

The Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) records details of immunisations given to your children from birth to 6 years of age. You will be reminded when immunisations are due or overdue.

NHMRC STANDARD CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION SCHEDULE
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Age	Disease	Vaccine	Date Due	Date Given
2 months	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis Poliomyelitis Haemophilus influenzae b	DTPw or DTPa injection Sabin oral (OPV) Hib (HbOC or PRP-OMP)		
4 months	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis Poliomyelitis Haemophilus influenzae b	DTPw or DTPa injection Sabin oral (OPV) Hib (HbOC or PRP-OMP)		
6 months	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis Poliomyelitis Haemophilus influenzae b	DTPw or DTPa injection Sabin oral (OPV) Hib (HbOC)		
12 months	Measles, mumps, rubella Haemophilus influenzae b	MMR injection Hib (PRP-OMP)		
18 months	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis Haemophilus influenzae b	DTPa or DTPw injection Hib (HbOC)		
4-5 years or before school entry	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis Poliomyelitis	DTPa or DTPw injection Sabin oral (OPV)		
10-16 years	Measles, mumps, rubella Hepatitis B (three doses, check with your doctor)	MMR injection Hepatitis B injection (Engerix B, HB Vax II)		
15-19 years or before leaving school	Diphtheria, tetanus Poliomyelitis	ADT injection Sabin oral (OPV)		

ILLNESSES YOU CAN PREVENT

Diphtheria is a painful infection that blocks the throat. It can cause death or heart or nerve damage. *Prevent with* – DTP or ADT injections.

Tetanus causes muscle spasm and death. It occurs after cuts, breaks in the skin, or burns.

Prevent with – DTP injections, ADT and booster injections every 10 years all through life.

Poliomyelitis can paralyse parts of the body including the throat. *Prevent with* – Sabin oral (OPV).

Measles causes a red blotchy, flat rash. It can damage ears, lungs and brain. *Prevent with* – MMR injections.

Mumps causes swelling of glands, testicles and other important organs. *Prevent with* – MMR injections.

Pertussis (Whooping cough) causes a severe lasting cough, difficult breathing and death.

Prevent with – DTPw (whole) or DTPa (acellular) injections.

Rubella (German measles) causes rash and fever. Women who get rubella early in their pregnancy are at risk of having a disabled or deaf baby. Women thinking about pregnancy should have a rubella test.

Prevent with – MMR injections.

Hepatitis B attacks the liver. The virus is spread by blood/blood contact, sexual contact and sharing needles. *Prevent with* – hepatitis B injections.

Influenza causes fever, headache, sore throat, cough, aches and pains. It can be life threatening for some people.

Prevent with – Influenza injection given each year to at risk groups.

Haemophilus influenzae type b causes meningitis and other childhood infections.

Prevent with – Hib injections
There are separate schedules for the different types of Hib injections – ask your doctor.

Contact:

Your doctor (listed under Medical Practitioners in the yellow pages of the phone book).

Your community health centre (listed in the white pages of the phone book under "C").

Your local council (listed under "L" in the white pages of the phone book).

For information from the ACIR phone 1800 653 809

Your Self Care Pharmacist
To find: (02) 6281 1366



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