

Immunization schedule for children

Vaccination,
the best protection

June 2023

By having your child vaccinated, you give him or her the best protection against certain serious diseases.

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines cause the immune system to produce defences known as antibodies. Antibodies then protect the vaccinated person when he or she comes into contact with the disease. This is a completely natural, protective reaction of the human body.

When should I have my child vaccinated?

In order to protect your child quickly, the first vaccines are given from the age of 2 months. Nonetheless, to find out at what age your child should receive the other essential vaccines, you should consult the immunization schedule below. With some vaccines, your child will have to receive several doses to get long term protection.

Your child should receive these vaccines at the ages indicated by a check mark:

Vaccine protecting against:	At 2 months	At 4 months	At 12 months	At 18 months	Between 4 and 6	Elementary 4	Secondary 3
Diphtheria-tetanus-whooping cough-hepatitis B-polio-Hib	✓	✓	✓ (without hepatitis B)				
Pneumococcus	✓	✓	✓				
Rotavirus	✓	✓					
Meningococcus				✓			✓
Measles-mumps-rubella-varicella*			✓	✓			
Diphtheria-tetanus-whooping cough-polio					✓		
Diphtheria-tetanus							✓
Hepatitis A-hepatitis B				✓			
Hepatitis A						✓	
Human papillomavirus						✓	✓

* For children born before June 1, 2018, one dose of varicella vaccine is administered between ages 4 and 6.

For optimal protection of your child, do not forget any vaccines and have the child vaccinated at the recommended ages.

Why should I have my child vaccinated against diseases that are now almost never seen?

It's true that the diseases that your child is protected against are fairly rare in Québec, but they can still be found. For example, tetanus will always be with us because it is caused by bacteria found in soil.

What's more, some diseases that are fairly rare in Québec are very common elsewhere in the world. So, your child can catch them through contact with people from the countries where they are found or on a trip. That's why it's important to be vaccinated against these diseases.

(see verso)

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Do vaccines present any risk for my child?

Vaccines are very safe. In the vast majority of cases, they do not cause any undesirable reaction. The most frequent undesirable reactions (slight fever or discomfort in the thigh or the arm) are not serious or long-lasting. Millions of doses of vaccines are administered around the world every year, and very few serious reactions are observed. In any case, it's better to receive a vaccine than to catch one of these serious diseases that the vaccines protect against. Can vaccines weaken my child's immune system?

No. The human body defends itself naturally from birth against thousands of different germs found in food, in the air, in water and on objects. The vaccine does not weaken the immune system; on the contrary, it stimulates it to produce defences against diseases.

My child is taking antibiotics. Can he receive his vaccines anyway?

Yes. A child who is taking antibiotics can receive a vaccine even if he or she has an ear infection or a running nose. Other than your child having a serious disease, there are not many reasons to put off the date the vaccine is to be administered. The person giving the vaccine will be able to provide you with information on this subject. It is important to always have your child vaccinated at the recommended ages.

My child has proper nutrition and good health. Is that enough to protect him or her against infectious diseases?

No. Proper diet and good health are not enough to fight the diseases against which the vaccines protect your child. They can greatly aid vaccines in fighting the germs but they cannot replace them. Please note that breast-fed children should also be vaccinated at the recommended ages.

If you have any questions, you can:

- ask the person giving the vaccine;
- call Info-Santé at 811;
- talk it over with your doctor;
- consult Quebec.ca/vaccination.