



## What is immunization and why is it important?

Immunization or vaccination is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your children against infectious diseases. When you receive an immunization, your immune system makes antibodies that fight infection. Many vaccine preventable diseases have become rare in Canada because the vaccines work so well and we have excellent immunization programs. However, in developing countries, these diseases still exist because they are lacking in immunization programs. That's why it's so important to contact a Travel Immunization Clinic before travelling to see if you could be at risk.

If children are not protected by immunizations and come in contact with a vaccine preventable disease, they may get very sick or even die. For each child attending school or licensed daycare centre in Ontario, documentation of up-to-date immunization or a valid exemption is required. Parents or guardians must, **by law**, provide this information to the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit and keep it up to date.

For medical or philosophical reasons, you may decide to not immunize your child. In this case, if the disease appears in your child's school or daycare, your child may have to stay out of school or daycare until the disease is gone.

## Where can you get immunized?

Call your health care provider to make an appointment. If you don't have a health card or a health care provider, call the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit at 519.355.1071 ext. 5900 to make an appointment at one of our clinics.

## Are there any side effects?

For most people, there are no side effects from immunization. However, some people may experience mild pain, swelling and redness where the shot has been given. Talk to your health care provider about how these reactions can be prevented or minimized. Serious side effects are rare. For more information ask your health care provider or call the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit at 519.355.1071 ext. 5900.

You should always discuss the benefits and risks of any vaccine with your health care provider.

## Keep your immunization records. It's important!

Get a yellow immunization card from your health care provider to keep a record of your shots. This will save you from getting unnecessary shots. Written immunization records are needed in the following situations:

- Starting childcare or kindergarten
- Transferring to a school in another area
- Going to camp
- Starting university, college or a job
- Going for emergency health care
- Travelling to other countries

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide immunization records for all children to the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit. Don't forget to let us know when your child gets another shot.

**Call 519.355.1071 ext. 5900.**

## To learn more about immunization

*Your Child's Best Shot: A Parent's Guide to Vaccination*

4th edition, 2015, by Dorothy L. Moore, MD, Editor and the Canadian Paediatric Society

**Immunize Canada**

[www.immunize.ca](http://www.immunize.ca)

**Caring for Kids**

[www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)

**Government of Canada**

<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-living-vie-saine/immunization-immunisation/index-eng.php>

**If you have questions, talk to your health care provider or call the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit at 519.355.1071 ext. 5900.**

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**Public Health**

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Adapted from Region of Waterloo Public Health

CD334-10/14



INFANTS



ADULTS



CHILDREN & YOUTH

When to get immunized


For immunization to work best, children should have their shots at the times indicated on the schedule below. For children attending school or licenced daycare centres in Ontario, documentation is required, **by law**, for diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, meningitis, varicella (for those born on or after January 1, 2010), measles, mumps and rubella vaccines.

Free routine immunizations for children in Ontario

Note: If your child misses any of these immunizations, this schedule may change.

Publicly Funded Routine Immunization Schedule for Children Beginning Immunization in Early Infancy (starting at 2 months of age)														
Age at Vaccination	Diptheria	Pertussis	Tetanus	Polio	HIB	Rota	Pneumococcal Conjugate	Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR)	Meningococcal Conjugate	Chickenpox (Varicella)	MMRV	Hepatitis B	HPV	Influenza
2 months	●	●	●	●	●	●	●							
4 months	●	●	●	●	●	●	●							
6 months	●	●	●	●	●									Influenza vaccine, each fall for anyone 6 months of age and older.
12 months							●	●	●*					
15 months										●				
18 months	●	●	●	●	●									
4-6 years	●	●	●	●							●***			
12 years (grade 7)									●**			●	●	
14-16 years	●	●	●											

\* Meningococcal conjugate C vaccine for children 1 year of age.    \*\* Meningococcal conjugate A, C, Y, W-135 vaccine for students in grade 7 and older.    \*\*\* Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella vaccine.



Thinking of getting pregnant?

Be sure you are protected against rubella, pertussis and chickenpox before pregnancy, to prevent harm to your baby during its development. Ask your health care provider to check this through a simple blood test.



Travelling to another country?

Consult your health care provider and/or the Travel Health Clinic at 1.888.426.6165 or 1.519.663.3395 travel@mlhu.on.ca

Report all vaccination dates to the  
Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit at  
519.355.1071 Ext. 5900  
or report online at:  
<http://www.chatham-kent.ca/vaccinations>  
or fax:  
519.436.3214



Protect against these diseases:

**Diphtheria** is a very serious bacterial infection. It can cause breathing problems, heart failure, paralysis (loss of control over muscles in the body), and death.

**Haemophilus B (Hib)** is a bacterium that can infect any part of the body. It can cause middle ear infections, breathing problems, damage to joints, meningitis, pneumonia (lung infection), and inflammation of the brain leading to brain damage, and death.

**Hepatitis B** is a virus that can cause serious liver problems such as liver failure and liver cancer; these can be fatal.

**Human Papillomavirus (HPV)** is a common virus that affects females and males. HPV can cause vaginal and penile cancer as well as genital warts.

**Influenza** is a viral infection that causes cough, high fever, chills, headache and muscle pain. It can cause pneumonia, middle ear infections, heart failure and death. This infection can vary from year to year depending on the strain and can be mild to severe. Anyone over six months of age can get the vaccine free of charge each year.

**Measles** cause rash, high fever, cough, runny nose and watery eyes. The result can be middle ear infection, pneumonia, inflammation of the brain, hearing loss, brain damage, and death.

**Meningococcal Infections** are very serious and can be fatal. Meningitis is an infection of the fluid and membranes which cover the brain and spinal cord.

**Mumps** cause fever, headache, painful swelling of the glands in the mouth and neck, earache and can cause inflammation of the brain. Mumps can cause temporary or permanent deafness and swelling of testes in men, which can lead to sterility.

**Pertussis (whooping cough)** causes severe coughing spells for weeks or months. It can also cause pneumonia, middle ear infection, convulsions (seizures), inflammation of the brain, and death. Children younger than one year of age have the highest risk of complications.

**Polio** can cause paralysis, 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 found in Canada because of our high immunization rates, but cases do occur elsewhere in the world, and may be acquired when travelling.

**Pneumococcal Infections** are the leading bacterial cause of meningitis, blood infection, pneumonia and ear infections.

**Rotavirus** is a common virus that infects the intestines causing severe, watery diarrhea, fever, and vomiting. It causes inflammation of the stomach and intestines, sometimes called gastroenteritis. It may lead to dehydration. Most young children are infected with it at least once by five years of age.

**Rubella (German measles)** causes fever, rash, swollen neck glands, swelling and pain in the joints, bruising, and bleeding. If you are pregnant and get rubella, it is very dangerous for your unborn baby.

**Tetanus (lockjaw)** causes painful muscle spasms, breathing failure and death. It is caused by bacteria and spores in the soil that can infect wounds.

**Varicella (chickenpox)** is a virus that causes a blister-like rash, itching, slight fever and tiredness. Getting chickenpox puts a child at risk of serious infections of the skin, pneumonia, inflammation of the brain, and stroke. Unborn babies may be at risk for birth defects.

ADULTS need immunizations too!

**Flu** vaccine is for influenza and is recommended yearly.

**Hepatitis A** is for those who travel to countries lacking in good sanitation and clean water, street drug users, and men who have sex with men.

**Hepatitis B** is for health care workers, street drug users, people with multiple sexual partners, and those at risk of exposure in their occupation, lifestyle or environment.

**MMR** is for those born after 1970 with no history of disease or previous immunization especially for women of childbearing years.

**Pneumococcal Vaccines** offer protection against pneumococcal disease which can affect adults of all ages.

**Tetanus, Diphtheria** boosters are recommended every 10 years. All adults 19 to 64 years of age who require a tetanus, diphtheria booster and have not already had an adult dose of pertussis should receive one lifetime dose of Adacel (or Boostrix) vaccine.

**Varicella (chickenpox)** is for those who have not had chickenpox, especially women of childbearing years.

**Zostavax** is for protection for adults age 50 years and older against shingles. Anyone who has had chickenpox can develop shingles.