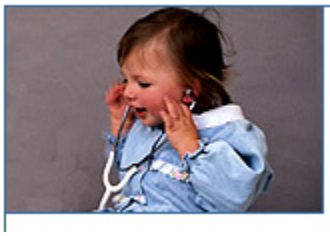

KEEP THEM UPDATED!

Why immunizations are so important

Are your vaccinations up to date? What about your family's?

Outbreaks of diseases such as SARS are a serious reminder to us of the consequences of infectious diseases. Before vaccines were available, diseases such as polio, diphtheria and measles were the major concern to the health and well being of Canadians. Now these diseases are rarely heard about in Canada, but that doesn't mean they're gone. In other parts of the world, even in developed countries, these diseases are still causing dreadful sickness, disabilities and death in children and adults, all preventable with vaccination.

Vaccinations for children

Young children are especially susceptible to diseases because of their undeveloped immune system. As they get older and are exposed to a larger number of viruses and bacteria, they will develop immunity, mostly without any problems. But some children will become infected with germs that cause permanent damage or even death. Luckily, we have vaccines to pre-expose young children to some of these germs and stimulate their own immune systems to provide ready protection. Immunity induced by vaccines works in the same way and just as well as immunity that comes from having the disease, but without the risk of disease.

Many new vaccines are available in Canada, providing more protection against diseases such as meningitis, pneumonia, varicella (chicken pox), and adolescent/adult pertussis (whooping cough).

The following schedule for infants and children was recommended by Canadian Coalition for Immunization

Awareness and Protection. Click here to find out about specific programs in your province or territory.

Routine Immunization Schedule for Infants and Children									
Age at Vaccination	dTap [1]	IPV	Hib [2]	MMR	Td [3] or dTap[10]	Hep B [4] (3 doses)	V	PC	MC
Birth						Infancy or preadolescence (9-13 yrs)			
2 months	X	X	X					(X)[8]	(X)[9]
4 months	X	X	X					X	X
6 months	X	(X)[5]	X					X	X
12 months				X			(X)[7]	X	
18 months	X	X	X	(X)[6] or					or
4-6 years	X	X		(X)[6]					
14-16 years					(X)[10]				(X)[9]

dTap [1]	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (acellular) vaccine
IPV	Inactivated poliovirus vaccine
Hib [2]	*Haemophilus influenzae* type b conjugate vaccine
MMR	Measles, mumps and rubella vaccine
Td	Tetanus and diphtheria toxoid, adult type with reduced diphtheria toxoid
dTap[10]	Tetanus and diphtheria toxoid, acellular pertussis, adolescent/adult type with reduced diphtheria and pertussis components
Hep B (3 doses)	Hepatitis B vaccine
V	Varicella
PC	Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine
MC	Meningococcal C conjugate vaccine

This is a general guideline for infants and children. This schedule may vary from province to province. Talk to your paediatrician, family physician, public health nurse, pharmacist or local health unit.
Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion

Vaccinations for adults

Vaccinations are necessary throughout our lifetime. Keeping up to date is essential if you want to have continued protection against some diseases. Protection from vaccines you received in childhood may wane, and health and lifestyle may change.

Adolescents and adults need boosters every 10 years for tetanus and diphtheria and less frequently against pertussis (whooping cough). Depending on your profession or

lifestyle, you should also inquire about vaccines against hepatitis A & B, pneumonia, and meningitis.

Ask your doctor or public health unit about vaccinations if you...

- have a chronic disease
- are pregnant or wanting to be pregnant
- are a health care provider or emergency worker
- are in the business of food preparation
- are in a profession where you may be exposed to vaccine preventable diseases or the germs that cause them
- are a gardener or work with soils
- are travelling to other countries outside western Europe and the US
- want to protect your family from vaccine preventable diseases

If you have not yet had measles, mumps, rubella or varicella, you may want to consider the protection of a vaccine.

Influenza immunization is now recommended for all Canadians over 6 months each autumn. For more information, read 'Getting serious about the flu- what you can do to prevent it'.

Vaccine Safety

Periodically, sensational and misleading headlines question the safety of vaccines. Some web sites also spread misinformation. But study after study proves that vaccines are extremely safe and reliable and that severe reactions to vaccines are very rare.

Addressing concerns about vaccines

- **Vaccines used today must meet much higher standards of quality than those used in the past**. Although children today receive many more vaccines than their parents or grandparents, the total amount of foreign proteins & sugars (antigens) is much lower than it used to be. Besides, vaccine components are few compared to the many germs to which children are

DID YOU KNOW?

- There are new vaccines to prevent meningitis, an infection of the membranes and fluid that cover the brain & spinal cord, in infants and adolescents.
- Breastfeeding is an excellent source of infant nutrition but is not an alternative to infant vaccination. Both are needed for a healthy baby.
- Diphtheria kills 1 in every 10 persons who get the illness; tetanus kills up to 1 in 5.
- Measles causes encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) in about 1 out of 1,000 cases.
- Chickenpox is one of the most common pre-disposing factors for the development of necrotizing fasciitis ("flesh-eating disease").
- To relieve mild reactions to a vaccination, such as pain, fussiness and low fever, give your child acetaminophen, NOT acetylsalicylic acid.

exposed every day, and provide protection against many, many more serious illnesses. By providing protection against a number of bacterial and viral pathogens, vaccines prevent the "weakening" of the immune system and consequent secondary bacterial infections occasionally caused by natural infection.

- **Thimerosal, a preservative, is NOT found in vaccines used in Canada for routine childhood vaccinations.**

- **There is no scientific evidence that immunization causes Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**. In fact, SIDS has decreased while immunizations have increased, mainly because parents are now putting their infants to sleep on their backs.

- **Vaccines approved for use in Canada are extensively tested and monitored** by Health Canada's Biologics and Genetic Therapies Directorate and Vaccine Associated Adverse Events Surveillance System (VAAESS), as well as the Canadian Paediatric Society's Immunization Monitoring Program ACTive (IMPACT) a paediatric hospital-based national active surveillance network. In addition, public health offices and physicians across Canada play an important surveillance role to detect any problems with vaccines.

How to ensure you are protected from vaccine preventable diseases

- Keep an up-to-date record of your vaccinations and those of your children. This is YOUR responsibility, not your doctor's.
- If you're not sure if your vaccinations are up to date, or if you're missing the protection provided by many new vaccines, call your doctor or public health office.
- Be informed. Ask questions of credible experts.
- Go to web sites supported by trusted organizations such as the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion, the Canadian Paediatric Society or Health Canada. (see below for more tips on searching the Internet)

Recommended reading: *Your Child's Best Shot* published by the Canadian Paediatric Society.

Canadians who keep their vaccinations up-to-date play an important role in controlling diseases that circulate around the globe. By reducing the circulation of viruses and bacteria that cause disease we reduce, control, eliminate and in some cases even eradicate diseases. Smallpox, which used to kill thousands of children each year, has been eradicated from the world through vaccine use, and polio, which still causes children to be disabled in Asia and Africa, has been eliminated from the western hemisphere, all due to vaccine. Vaccines are our most effective armour, but only if we use them.

For more information:

Health Canada, Division of Immunization and Respiratory Diseases
Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion
Canadian Paediatric Society
Centres for Disease Control & Prevention (U.S.) National Immunization Program
World Health Organization: Vaccines, Immunization and Biologicals

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