

Immunise your child on time

It's their best protection



immunise

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If you are a parent or caregiver, this pamphlet is for you.

It tells you about the recommended ages for your baby to receive their immunisations.

Babies and children have the best protection when they are immunised on time.

Protect your child and family

Immunisation is the best way to protect your family from 13 serious diseases. It's free in New Zealand for all babies, children and young people until their 18th birthday.*

Immunisation works by helping your child develop antibodies to fight disease. It saves millions of lives around the world every year.



* HPV immunisation is funded for all aged 9-26 years; MMR immunisation is funded for all born from 1 January 1969.

Why immunise?

Babies are usually born with some passive immunity to disease. Breastfed babies get additional antibodies from their mother's milk. This passive immunity only lasts a short while, and it can't protect your baby from all diseases.

Babies and children need immunisation to protect them from serious diseases.

It's important that your baby or child is immunised at the recommended times to give them the best protection possible.



Keeping track of immunisations

Start your child's immunisations when they are 6 weeks old, for their best protection from disease.

The **National Immunisation Schedule** is the timetable of recommended immunisations. It shows when your child should have each immunisation to get the best possible protection.

It's important for your child to have all their immunisations.

Take a look at the National Immunisation Schedule on the next page. It is important to try and immunise your child at the right time to give them the best protection, but if you're late, you can usually catch up. (Note: You need to begin immunisations against rotavirus before your child is 15 weeks old.) If you think your child might have missed one or some of their immunisations, talk to your family doctor or nurse.

The doctor or nurse will record each immunisation your child receives on the **National Immunisation Register** (NIR) (see page 10 for more information about the NIR).

Immunisations are also recorded on the **Immunisation Certificate** in your child's *Well Child Tamariki Ora My Health Book*. Remember to take the *Well Child Tamariki Ora My Health Book* with you to the doctor or nurse each time your child goes in for their immunisation. You will need to show the Immunisation Certificate when your child starts at a child care service, kōhanga reo or primary school.

Immunisation is your choice – please talk to your family doctor or nurse if you have any questions.

The National Immunisation Schedule

Age Disease to protect against Vaccine

Pregnancy

Tetanus + diphtheria + whooping cough (pertussis)

Boostrix®

Influenza

Brand varies.

6

Weeks

Rotavirus (first dose must be given before 15 weeks)

Rotarix® (oral)

Diphtheria + tetanus + whooping cough (pertussis) + polio + hepatitis B + *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)

Infanrix® hexa

Pneumococcal disease

Synflorix®

3

Months

Rotavirus (second dose must be given before 25 weeks)

Rotarix® (oral)

Diphtheria + tetanus + whooping cough + polio + hepatitis B + *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)

Infanrix® hexa

5

Months

Diphtheria + tetanus + whooping cough + polio + hepatitis B + *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)

Infanrix® hexa

Pneumococcal disease

Synflorix®

12

Months

Measles + mumps + rubella

Priorix®

Pneumococcal disease

Synflorix®

15

Months

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)

Hiberix®

Measles + mumps + rubella

Priorix®

Chickenpox (varicella)

Varivax®

4

Years

Diphtheria + tetanus + whooping cough + polio

Infanrix® IPV

11+12

Years

Tetanus + diphtheria + whooping cough

Boostrix®

Human papillomavirus (HPV)

Gardasil® 9
(2 doses, 6 months apart)

What serious diseases does immunisation protect against?

Chickenpox (varicella) is a virus that is usually mild, but can lead to serious complications such as pneumonia, and problems with the kidneys, heart, joints or nervous system.

Diphtheria is a throat infection. It makes it hard to breathe or swallow. Diphtheria may also affect the nerves, muscles and heart.

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) causes meningitis (an infection around the brain) and epiglottitis (swelling in the throat that blocks the breathing passages). It may also cause pneumonia and infection of the joints and under the skin.

Hepatitis B attacks and damages the liver. It can make the sufferer feel sick and tired and turn their skin a yellow colour.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) can cause cervical and some other cancers. It is a virus that almost all adult New Zealanders are exposed to at some point. It can also cause genital warts.

Measles causes a rash, a runny nose, coughing and sore, watery eyes. It may also cause pneumonia, ear infections and brain damage.

Mumps causes swelling around the face, a fever and a headache. Mumps may cause swelling of the brain and deafness.

Pneumococcal disease causes pneumonia, meningitis and blood poisoning. It may also cause sinus and ear infections.

Polio (poliomyelitis) can paralyse the body and make it hard to breathe.

Rotavirus causes vomiting and diarrhoea. This can lead to severe dehydration and sometimes death. Young babies are most at risk.

Rubella causes a mild illness with a rash and joint pain. It is serious if a pregnant woman catches rubella early in her pregnancy. Her baby may be born with serious problems, such as deafness, blindness, heart defects and brain damage.

Tetanus causes muscles to stiffen and spasm, and makes it extremely hard to breathe or swallow.

Whooping cough (pertussis) damages the breathing tubes, causing coughing spells and vomiting. It may lead to permanent lung damage, and can cause babies to stop breathing. Young babies are most at risk.



Extra protection

Some babies and children may be offered additional immunisations if they are at higher risk of disease.

Your family doctor or nurse will discuss these with you.



Reactions

It is common for babies and young children to have mild reactions after immunisation. These reactions may last for up to 2 days. They can take the form of:

- irritability (tiredness and crying)
- mild fever
- a small lump where the injection was given.

Some babies may have mild vomiting and diarrhoea for up to a week after receiving the rotavirus vaccine.

What should you do if your child has a reaction?

- Don't rub the injection site because this may make the reaction worse.
- Loosen your child's clothing if they are hot.
- Give your child extra fluids to drink (eg, water or more breastfeeds).
- Only give your child paracetamol or ibuprofen if your nurse or doctor says to do so.

If you're worried about your child's reaction to an immunisation, talk to your doctor or nurse or call the free Healthline service on 0800 611 116 any time day or night.

National Immunisation Register

The NIR holds the immunisation details for all New Zealand children.

Each time your child receives an immunisation, your doctor or nurse will record it on the NIR.

This helps make sure that your child gets the right immunisations at the right time. You'll be sent a reminder when each immunisation is due.

Your midwife or doctor will tell you more about the NIR before your baby is born and when they talk with you about immunisations.

What's on the NIR?

The NIR records the following details about your child:

- their name, home address, date of birth, sex and ethnicity
- their unique health number (National Health Index or NHI)
- their family doctor, nurse and Well Child Tamariki Ora provider
- their local district health board (DHB)
- the immunisations that they have been given
- your contact details.

The NIR will also record if you have decided not to have your child immunised.

Who can see what's on the NIR?

Only authorised health care providers can see your child's details on the NIR.

The information is there to make sure your child gets the free immunisations they are entitled to.

You can ask your family doctor or nurse for a copy of the information held on the NIR about your child at any time.

Choosing not to have your child's immunisation details recorded on the NIR

If you don't want your child's immunisation details to be recorded on the NIR, you can complete an 'opt-off' form. Ask a doctor or nurse for the form.

Your child can still have free immunisations up to the age of 18 years, even if you have decided not to have their immunisation details recorded on the NIR. The NIR will still hold your child's name, date of birth, NHI number and local DHB.



For more information about immunisation

- Talk to your family doctor or nurse.
- Read the section on immunisations in your *Well Child Tamariki Ora My Health Book*.
- Call Healthline 24/7 on **0800 611 116** or call **0800 IMMUNE (466 863)** 9.00am to 4.30pm, Mon-Fri.
- Visit the Ministry of Health immunisation webpage at: health.govt.nz/immunisation



This resource is available from www.healthed.govt.nz or the Authorised Provider at your local DHB. Revised June 2020. **Code HE1327**



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