

Protecting Your Child, Made Simple: A Guide to Vaccines

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What are Vaccines?

Vaccines help protect your child from serious diseases by teaching their body how to fight off germs before they ever get sick. They work like a practice run for the immune system—so if your child is ever exposed to a disease, their body already knows how to stop it. Vaccines are carefully tested for safety and have been used for decades to keep children healthy and strong.

(Toronto Public Health, n.d.)

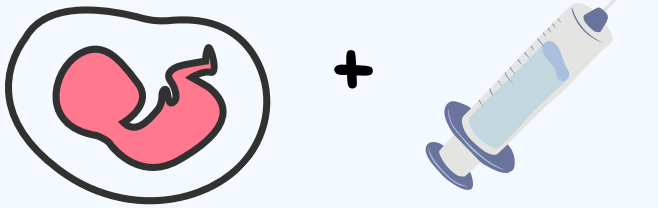
Vaccines During Pregnancy

If you're pregnant, to help protect yourself and baby during their first few months from serious illness, you should be vaccinated against:

- Whooping cough (pertussis)
- flu & COVID-19

Talk to your health care provider or local public health unit about making sure your vaccines are up to date as other vaccines may be recommended for you.

(Government of Ontario, 2024)



The ABCs of Boosting Your Child's Immunity in addition to vaccines

A. balanced diet is needed, including vegetables, fruits, and omega fats.

B. Breast milk provides your baby with antibodies to fight infection.

C. Childhood vaccinations protect your baby from contagious diseases.

(Toronto Public Health, n.d.)

Tracking Immunizations

Track your immunizations using Toronto Public Health's Immunization Connect Ontario (ICON) on their website: tph.icon.ehealthontario.ca

A secure online provincial system used to track and report a child's immunizations to Toronto Public Health.

Vaccine Schedule for Preschoolers

2 MONTHS	4 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	15 MONTHS	18 MONTHS	4-6 YEARS
✔ Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio & *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)	✔ Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio & *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)	✔ Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio & *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)	✔ Measles, mumps & rubella	✔ Varicella	✔ Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio & *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)	✔ Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis & polio
✔ Pneumococcal	✔ Pneumococcal		✔ Meningococcal			✔ Measles, mumps, rubella & varicella
✔ Rotavirus	✔ Rotavirus		✔ Pneumococcal			

6 MONTHS & OLDER ✔ Influenza vaccine (every fall)

(Toronto Public Health, n.d.)

Vaccine Safety & Monitoring



After vaccination, stay at the clinic for 15 minutes. Most serious reactions occur right after getting the vaccine and are treated immediately.

watch your child for any reactions like:

- high fever (40°C or higher)
- allergic reactions (rash or hives)
- unusual fussing or crying
- unusually low energy or sleepiness
- severe vomiting or diarrhea
- severe swelling where the needle went in

(Toronto Public Health, n.d.)

Importance of Improving Your Child's Immunization Experience

General Tips

Be Positive

- Take deep breaths to stay calm.
- Use your normal speaking voice.

Plan Ahead

- For non breastfeeding babies, prepare sugar water. Mix one teaspoon of sugar with two teaspoon of water (for babies only)

Tips for Babies

- Cuddle your baby on your lap
- Distract your baby with singing, breastfeeding or toys
- Breastfeeding before, during and after the needle provides comfort to both mom and baby

Tips for Toddlers

- Your child may feel a "poke or pinch" for a few seconds
- Have your child choose a favourite item for comfort or distraction
- Hold your child on your lap in a comforting hug.
- Blow bubbles or take deep breaths together

Tips for Children

- Talk to your child about the health visit.
- Your child may feel a "poke or pinch."
- Have your child decide on an item to distract
- Sit up during the needle.
- Take deep breaths together and try to stay calm.
- It's okay to look if they want to.
- Offer praise. Positive reinforcement works for kids of all ages.

Numbing Creams



There are topical numbing creams or patches you can buy without a prescription. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist on how much medication to apply and where to apply it. Read the instructions before applying the cream or patch. It may take 30 to 60 minutes for the medication to take effect, depending on the product.

Do not use Tylenol or Advil before your child receives the vaccine(s).

(Toronto Public Health, n.d.)