

What are vaccines?

Vaccines are made up of a very small amount of inactivated or weakened viruses. Vaccinations help the body learn to protect itself and prevent us from getting diseases.

Why should my child be vaccinated?

Vaccination is **one of the most important things you can do to protect your child's health**. It protects against many germs and viruses, which may be harmless to some people but can make others very sick. Vaccinating your child will also protect the people close to your child, and the community, by helping to prevent the spread of disease.

Are vaccines safe?

Vaccines are some of the most strictly regulated medical products in Canada. They must go through extensive testing to show that they are safe and effective in preventing diseases before they are made available to the public. As with any medical procedure, there are certain circumstances under which vaccination may involve more risks. Your healthcare provider should assess your child to ensure the benefits of vaccination outweigh any potential risks.

How are vaccines given?

Most vaccines are given through a small needle that goes into your child's arm or thigh depending on their age. There are some vaccines that can be given by mouth or by nasal spray.

What diseases can be prevented by vaccines?

There are vaccines available to prevent many different diseases. For more information on these vaccines and the diseases they prevent, visit www.healthunit.com/vaccine-information.

Do vaccines work?

The number of people who get sick from preventable diseases in Canada is low because of the wide availability of vaccination programs. In countries where only a few people are vaccinated, illness and death resulting from vaccine-preventable diseases are much more common.

If some of these diseases are rare, why does my child need to be vaccinated?

Even though many of the diseases prevented by vaccination are rare, they still exist and can be spread easily. Many vaccine-preventable diseases have no treatment or cure and in some cases, those who get sick can die. Vaccination programs work best when entire communities are vaccinated.

Ontario's *Immunization of School Pupils Act* requires that elementary and high school students be vaccinated appropriately. Children attending licensed child care centres are also required to be vaccinated under the *Child Care and Early Years Act*. Some universities, colleges, and jobs may also require vaccinations. There are, however, some circumstances where exemptions will be granted. For more information, talk to your healthcare provider or contact the Middlesex-London Health Unit. You can also visit www.ontario.ca/vaccines or www.healthunit.com/immunization.

When should my child be vaccinated?

Vaccines work best when they are given at the right time. The chart below shows the current schedule for Ontario's free vaccination program for children. One checkmark indicates one vaccine is given. More than one dose of similar vaccine may be given during a child's lifetime, to ensure they have ongoing protection. For the most up-to-date schedule, visit www.ontario.ca/vaccines.

Age	Diphtheria	Tetanus	Pertussis (whooping cough)	Polio	Haemophilus Influenza Type B	Pneumococcal Conjugate 13	Rotavirus	Measles, Mumps, Rubella	Varicella (chickenpox)	Meningococcal C	Meningococcal ACYW-135	Hepatitis B	Human Papillomavirus	Influenza
2 months			✓			✓	✓							
4 months			✓			✓	✓							
6 months			✓				*✓							
12 months						✓		✓		✓				
15 months								✓						
18 months			✓											
4-6 years		✓						✓						
Grade 7											✓	✓	✓	
14-16 years		✓												
Every Autumn														✓

*may be 2 or 3 doses: dependent on product used
Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule for Ontario – December 2016

Other provinces in Canada may follow different vaccination schedules. Also, families who immigrated from other countries may have started on a different schedule. If you have moved to Ontario from another province or country, visit your healthcare provider to find out if your child is protected.

Will getting more than one vaccine on the same day be harmful to my child's body?

It is safe for many vaccines to be given on the same day, even for small babies. Your child's body needs to be challenged in order to learn how to protect itself. This is because your child's body comes into contact with millions of germs every day.

What can I expect when my child gets vaccinated?

Your child's healthcare provider will do an assessment to make sure that it is safe for your child to receive the vaccine. Be sure to ask questions and talk to your healthcare provider about concerns that you may have. Your child's healthcare provider should also discuss any potential side effects and provide advice about how to deal with them.

How can I prepare my child for their vaccination?

Getting a vaccination can be scary for some children. Depending on your child's age, there are different things you can do to take away some of their fear and lessen any pain that they may experience. For age appropriate tips, visit www.healthunit.com/immunization.

Are vaccines only for children?

It's also important for adults to ensure their vaccines are up-to-date. Adults may require booster doses for some vaccines they received in childhood. Depending on their age, they may also be eligible for vaccinations against other diseases. Parents, grandparents, and other adults can help prevent the spread of diseases by getting vaccinated themselves.

Where can my child get vaccinated?

Your child can receive their vaccinations at their healthcare provider's office. If your child does not have a healthcare provider, call the Health Unit, at 519-663-5317 ext. 2330, to discuss other options. In grade 7, your child may be eligible to receive some vaccines at school. For more information, visit www.healthunit.com/immunization.

How do I keep track of my child's vaccines?

A vaccination record acts as proof that your child has been vaccinated. Your healthcare provider should give you a record for your child if you do not already have one. **Please notify the Health Unit of the vaccines your child gets and the date that they get them. You can do this by:**

Visiting www.healthunit.com/immunization-records to view, report or print your child's immunization record

Calling 519-663-5317 ext. 2330

Helpful Websites:

Middlesex-London Health Unit
www.healthunit.com/immunization

Ontario Government
www.ontario.ca/vaccines

Public Health Agency of Canada
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

Immunize Canada
www.immunize.ca

Middlesex-London Health Unit
50 King St., London, ON N6A 5L7
tel: (519) 663 - 5317 • fax: (519) 663 - 9581
health@mlhu.on.ca

Strathroy Office - Kenwick Mall
51 Front St. E., Strathroy ON N7G 1Y5
tel: (519) 245 - 3230 • fax: (519) 245 - 4772

Immunization: Your Best Protection



Routine Childhood Vaccines

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