

Protect Your Child From Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio and Hib

What are the primary immunization and the booster shot?

These are combined vaccines, which protect a person from four or five diseases.

The primary immunization protects against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, and Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) disease. This is given at 2, 4, 6, and 18 months of age.

The booster shot is a dose given at 4-6 years of age to protect against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, and polio. No booster dose is needed for Hib at 4-6 years.

What is diphtheria?

Diphtheria is caused by bacteria that can infect the nose and throat and stop proper breathing. It can also cause skin or ear infections, and can lead to heart failure and nerve damage. Diphtheria can affect children and adults. About one in ten people who get the disease die from it.

What is pertussis?

Pertussis or whooping cough is caused by a bacterial infection that can be spread very easily from one person to another. It causes severe coughing that interferes with breathing. Complications of pertussis include seizures, convulsions, pneumonia, brain damage and death. Children who have been immunized may still get the disease, but in a much milder form. Pertussis is most serious in children under two years of age.

What is tetanus?

Tetanus, or lockjaw, is a serious and often fatal disease caused by bacteria that are present in soil, dust, and manure. The bacteria get into the body through a wound and produce a poison, causing the muscles to go into spasms. Tetanus can affect children and adults.

What is polio?

Polio is a disease caused by a virus. The virus damages nerve cells, which may lead to permanent paralysis. Polio can affect children and adults.

What is Hib disease?

Bacteria called Haemophilus influenzae type b cause Hib disease. It can lead to Hib meningitis, an infection of the covering of the brain and also, epiglottitis, a swelling of the throat that can cause breathing to stop. The disease is most common in children under one year of age.

How common are these diseases?

Pertussis and Hib disease continue to cause outbreaks every year in persons who have not been immunized. Diphtheria, polio, and tetanus are rare diseases now, because people are immunized against them.

When does my child need these vaccines?

The primary immunization is given at 2, 4, 6, and 18 months of age.
The booster dose is given at 4-6 years of age.

Sometimes, an illness or medical condition means that a child should not get the vaccine at this time. This does not mean that a child should never have the vaccine. Let the nurse or doctor know **before** the immunization if your child has any of the following:

- A reaction to a previous immunization;
- Any illness that is more serious than a cold;
- Convulsions or seizures.

Are there side effects to these vaccines?

You should not expect any serious side effects from this vaccine. However, you may see any of these minor reactions:

- Soreness, swelling or redness at the site of the injection;
- Slight fever – underarm temperature up to 39.4C (103F);
- Fussiness or crying;
- A painless, pea sized lump at the site of injection, which can last for 6-8 weeks.

Are there more serious side effects?

Serious side effects are very rare with these vaccines. Please call your community/public health nurse or doctor immediately if any of the following occur.

- High fever that cannot be brought down;
- Crying or screaming non-stop for more than three hours because of pain;
- Convulsions or seizures;
- Collapse (child is pale, limp, quiet and does not respond normally);
- Allergic reactions such as wheezing, swelling of the face or mouth or hives;
- Unusual behaviour of any kind.

For additional information and services contact Health and Community Services , listed in the white pages of your telephone book.