

## Childhood Vaccines are Safe

**Protect your children. Get all their shots on time. The shots are free.  
Call your local public health unit or doctor to make an appointment.**

### Check what **you know**.

Circle yes or no to the following sentences about vaccine safety.

I <b>know</b> that vaccines are safe for my baby.	Yes	No
I <b>know</b> vaccines are so safe that my baby can get more than one shot at a time.	Yes	No
I <b>know</b> every batch of vaccine is tested for safety.	Yes	No
I <b>know</b> vaccines are safe because they do not cause autism, multiple sclerosis, or diabetes.	Yes	No
I <b>know</b> vaccines are checked for side effects.	Yes	No

If you have answered '**no**' to any of the above, read on to learn more.

### Vaccines are safe

Vaccines are safe for your child. No parts of a vaccine will harm your child or give your child any diseases. An allergic reaction after getting a shot is rare. If this happens, there are treatments.

Vaccines are made from weakened or dead germs that allow your child to become protected from the childhood diseases.

Vaccines also have preservatives and ingredients that make them safe and help your child become protected. Like healthy food and clean water, vaccines help keep your child healthy. Food, water, and vaccines are all checked by Health Canada to make sure they are safe for everyone.

For their best protection, your child should have all of the shots by 18 months of age. It is important that your child get all of the shots on time.

### It is safe for your child to get more than one shot at a time

Your child can get several shots or vaccines at one time. Even when your child gets several shots at the same time the side effects, which may include a low fever or soreness where the shot was given, will be mild and will last for only a day or two. The side effects do not get worse with more shots.

### Vaccines are tested for many years

It takes more than 10 years to make a new vaccine that is safe for your child. The new vaccine must be tested many times even before it is given to humans.

Once the vaccine has been carefully made and is ready to be tested on humans, the new vaccine is first given to hundreds of people, then to thousands of people to make sure it is safe and effective.

When the new vaccine has been tested on all these people it is then approved for release to everyone who needs to receive it. Even after the vaccine has been released, it keeps on being checked for any side effects or reactions. When each new batch of vaccine is made, it is always tested by Health Canada before it is used.

### **Vaccines do not cause illness or disease**

Many studies show that vaccines do not cause autism, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), or other illnesses. These studies are posted on the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies website at [www.iom.edu/CMS/3793/4705.aspx](http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3793/4705.aspx).

### **Side effects from the vaccine are less than from the disease**

The danger from the disease is many times more serious than the risk of a side effect from the vaccine. Health authorities around the world take vaccine safety very seriously. That is why every parent is asked to call the doctor or clinic if any unusual or unexpected side effects happen after getting the shots.

Millions of vaccines are given every year in Canada. The vaccines are very safe. Serious side effects from the vaccine are very rare.

### **Your voice counts – A true story of whooping cough vaccine**

Before 1997, several parents would call their health clinic the day after their child's shots were given, stating that their babies were very irritable, had fever and were difficult to comfort. Parents' concerns were given to the makers of the vaccine. As soon as the technology was developed, the vaccine was changed. The whooping cough (pertussis) part of the vaccine was broken into pieces and then only the most important pieces were used to make the new whooping cough

vaccine. Now, the side effects from this vaccine are much milder, and there are almost no calls to health clinics or doctors' offices after the shots are given.

### **For more information**

Public Health Agency of Canada:  
[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/vs-sv/index.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/vs-sv/index.html)

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia:  
[www.chop.edu/consumer/jsp/division/generics.jsp?id=75694](http://www.chop.edu/consumer/jsp/division/generics.jsp?id=75694)

Canadian Paediatric Society:  
[www.caringforkids.cps.ca/](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/)

### **More BC HealthFiles on childhood immunization:**

[#50a Your Baby's Immune System and Vaccines](#)

[#50b The Benefits of Vaccinating Your Child](#)

[#50d Childhood Vaccines: What is in the Vaccines and Why](#)

[#50e Getting Ready for Your Child's Shots](#)

[#50f Childhood Vaccines: Questions and Answers](#)

For more BC HealthFile topics visit [www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm](http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm), or visit your local public health unit.

Call the BC NurseLine to speak to a registered nurse, available 24-hours every day:

- In Greater Vancouver, call 604-215-4700
- In BC, call toll-free 1-866-215-4700
- Deaf and hearing-impaired, call 1-866-889-4700
- Pharmacist available 5pm to 9am every day
- Translation services in over 130 languages upon request.

Visit BC HealthGuide OnLine – a world of health information you can trust at [www.bchealthguide.org](http://www.bchealthguide.org)



BC Centre for Disease Control  
AN AGENCY OF THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITY