



Be wise –  
Immunize!

Immunization (Vaccination)

# What are vaccines?

**VACCINES ARE** also called needles, shots or immunizations. Vaccines help the immune system learn how to recognize and fight the germs that cause diseases.





## Why are vaccines important?

**VACCINES HELP** protect kids and adults against serious diseases and are known to be very safe. Because of vaccines, not many Manitobans and Canadians get sick or die from vaccine-preventable diseases. Sometimes vaccines may cause minor side effects but these are usually mild (such as sore arm or leg, headache, feeling tired) and usually last only a few days. The diseases and their complications are far more serious than the possible side effects of the vaccines.

**BE WISE – IMMUNIZE!**

The following tables provide information on what vaccines are recommended and when they should be given. Individuals in these age groups can

**GET THESE VACCINES  
FOR FREE.**

## Are you and your child protected?

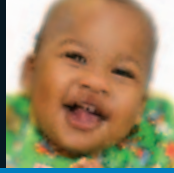
Manitoba Health recommends that infants, children and adults get immunized against diseases such as:

- diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus (lock jaw), polio, haemophilus influenzae type b
- measles, mumps, German measles
- pneumococcal infections
- influenza (the flu)
- meningitis
- varicella (chickenpox) and
- hepatitis B.

These vaccines are important because they protect against these serious diseases.



# Recommended Immunization Schedule for Infants



## **2, 4 AND 6 MONTHS**

One needle at each visit to protect against diphtheria, whooping cough, lockjaw, polio and haemophilus influenzae type b; another needle at each visit to protect against pneumococcal infections

## **12 MONTHS**

One needle to protect from measles, mumps and German measles; another needle to protect against chickenpox

## **18 MONTHS**

One or two “booster” needles to continue protection (same vaccines as 2, 4 and 6 months – see above)

*Note: The flu shot is recommended every year for healthy babies six to 23 months of age and for their household contacts such as sisters, brothers and parents. The flu shot is also recommended for people looking after very young children (under six months of age), such as child care workers and grandparents.*

# Recommended Immunization Schedule for Children



## **4-6 YEARS (PRESCHOOL)**

Booster needles to continue protection against diphtheria, whooping cough, lockjaw, polio; also measles, mumps and German measles and, if the child is still at risk for chickenpox, chickenpox vaccine will be offered

## **10 YEARS (GRADE 4)**

Three-dose series of needles to protect against hepatitis B; also a shot for meningitis and if the child is still at risk, the chickenpox vaccine will be offered

## **14-16 YEARS (GRADE 9)**

Booster needle to provide protection against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough

*Note: The flu shot is recommended every year for household contacts of babies from birth to 23 months of age (ex: sisters and brothers, parents). It is also recommended for children with chronic health conditions, such as asthma or diabetes.*

# Recommended Immunization Schedule for Adults



*For those who have already been immunized with the childhood vaccines*

## **YEARLY**

Influenza vaccine (the flu shot) is recommended for everyone age 65 or older (seniors); for people with chronic health conditions AT ANY AGE; also health care workers, first responders, volunteers and others who have regular contact with high-risk groups such as seniors and infants

## **EVERY 10 YEARS OR A MINIMUM OF ONCE AT AGE 50**

One booster dose to protect against tetanus (lockjaw) and diphtheria

## **OVER AGE 65 OR FOR PEOPLE OF ANY AGE WITH CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS**

A pneumonia shot  
(generally only one dose is needed in a lifetime)

## **BORN IN 1970 OR LATER**

Adults who have never received the measles and mumps vaccines or have not had these diseases, should get one or two measles/mumps needles. The number of needles will depend on the risks of being exposed to the diseases (ex: health care workers, students attending college or university)

*Adults who have never had German measles, or have never been immunized against the disease, should get one dose of German measles vaccine.*

# Are vaccines completely safe and effective?

**VACCINES HAVE BEEN SHOWN** to be very safe. Like any other medicine, side effects can occur. No vaccine is 100% effective but they all protect from disease(s) and serious disease complications. Remember, talk to your doctor or public health nurse about any concerns you have about vaccines.





## How many doses are required?

**THE NUMBER OF DOSES** depends on the age when immunization is started, the type of vaccine and the risk of being exposed to the disease(s) the vaccine protects against. It also depends on the reason for the immunization (ex: preschool boosters at four to six years of age). Some vaccines can be given in one needle while others may need to be given in a series of needles.

## How are the vaccines given?

**VACCINES ARE USUALLY** given in the muscle of the thigh in infants or the upper arm for older children and adults. Some vaccines are given in the skin, just above the muscle.





## What are the possible side effects of vaccines?

**VACCINES MAY CAUSE** side effects that may last for a couple of days. These include redness, swelling and soreness where the needle was given; headache, chills, fever up to 38°C, drowsiness (being sleepy), fussiness (being cranky), upset stomach and vomiting (especially for young children). Bad or severe side effects should be reported to your doctor or public health nurse.

Vaccine reactions are recorded and monitored in Manitoba and across Canada. That is how we know the side effects from these vaccines are mostly minor. Vaccines offer life-saving protection against many kinds of serious diseases. The benefits of vaccines are far greater than any possible danger or discomfort from side effects.

# Who should not receive vaccines?

**THERE ARE VERY FEW** individuals who cannot receive vaccines. A doctor or public health nurse may decide not to give the vaccine. Each situation will be assessed and a decision will be made either to offer the vaccine at the time of the clinic visit, or at a later date.



## Do we have to get immunized?

**NO**, immunizations are voluntary in Manitoba. But please remember that vaccines help protect you and your child from disease (s) and also help protect others who cannot be immunized because they have certain health conditions. If you want to know more about immunization and why it is important, talk to your doctor or public health nurse.

## RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATION RESOURCES:

Available from your local public health or doctor's office:

- Fact sheets about vaccines
- Other resources about vaccines

At your local library:

- Resources (may include the books listed below)
- Access to the Internet

Available at local bookstores:

- *Your Child's Best Shot: A parent's guide to vaccination* (2006). Canadian Paediatric Society
- *Vaccines: What You Should Know* (2003).  
Dr. Paul Offitt & Dr. Louis M. Bell

Available on the Internet:

- Government of Manitoba-Public Health Division  
[www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/index.html)
- Immunization and Respiratory Infections Division  
Public Health Agency of Canada  
[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/index.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/index.html)
- Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness  
and Promotion Canadian Public Health Association  
[www.immunize.cpha.ca/english/index-e.htm](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca/english/index-e.htm)
- Canadian Paediatric Society  
[www.caringforkids.cps.ca/immunization/index.htm](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/immunization/index.htm)

## For more information

Talk to your doctor, public health nurse  
or call Health Links-Info Santé in Winnipeg: **788-8200**  
toll-free (outside Winnipeg): **1-888-315-9257**