

Vaccines for Children aged 7 to 18 years



Paediatric & Neonatology Department

What are vaccines?

Vaccines can prevent certain serious or deadly infections. They are a way of teaching your body how to fight the germs that cause infections. Thanks to vaccines, many fewer people get seriously ill or die from infections than in the past.

Vaccines usually come in shots, but some come as nose sprays or medicines that children swallow. When a person gets a vaccine, this is called "vaccination" or "immunization."

Why should my child get vaccinated?



Getting vaccinated can help keep your child from getting sick. If your child does get sick, being vaccinated can keep them from getting severely ill. Plus, being vaccinated helps protect the people around your child from getting sick.

What vaccines do children age 7 to 18 get?

Doctors recommend that children age 7 to 18 get vaccines to prevent the following infections:

- **Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)** – COVID-19 can cause a fever, cough, and trouble breathing, along with other symptoms. Some people get severely ill from COVID-19.
- **Influenza (flu)** – The flu can cause fever, chills, muscle aches, cough, or sore throat.



- **Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis** – Vaccines to prevent these 3 different diseases are usually grouped together in 1 shot. Diphtheria can cause a thick covering in the back of the throat that can lead to breathing problems. Tetanus causes the muscles to work abnormally. Pertussis, also called "whooping cough," can cause a severe cough.



- **Human papillomavirus (HPV)** – There are different types of HPV, which can lead to different problems. Depending on the type and where the infection is, HPV infection can lead to cancer of the cervix, vagina, penis, or anus. It can also cause genital warts or cancer of the mouth and throat.



Doctors recommend that all children get the HPV vaccine. The reason to get the vaccine at a young age is because it only works if it given before a person gets infected with HPV. HPV is spread through sexual contact.

- **Meningococcus** – Meningococcus is a germ that can cause a serious body-wide infection of the blood or the tissues around the brain.



- **Pneumococcus** – Pneumococcus is a germ that can cause infections of the lungs, ears, blood, or tissues around the

brain. Most children age 7 to 18 do not need this vaccine. But children who have certain medical conditions might need it.

- **Hepatitis A** – Hepatitis A does not usually cause problems in children, but it can cause severe liver disease in adults. Children who get the hepatitis A vaccine help prevent the adults around them from getting the infection. If your child never got this vaccine at a younger age, they might need to get it.



Some children would need other vaccines, for example, if they missed a vaccine when they were younger.

How many vaccine doses does my child need?

Each vaccine is different. Some vaccines work after just 1 dose. Others need 2 or more doses to prevent an infection. For most vaccines, it takes a couple of weeks before a person is fully protected.

Some vaccines prevent an infection for the rest of your life. Others stop working well after some time. A "booster" is a vaccine dose given after a number of years. It reminds the body how to prevent an infection.

At what ages will my child get vaccines?

Different vaccines are given at different ages. Most healthy children follow a set vaccine schedule. Even though doctors usually follow a set schedule, different children can get doses at different times. For example, many children get the HPV vaccine at age 11 or 12. But they can get it any time from age 9 to 26.

Children might not follow the usual vaccine schedule if they:

- Have certain medical problems
- Started getting their vaccines later than usual
- Started getting their vaccines on time, but then missed doses and fell behind schedule

Your child's doctor or nurse will recommend a vaccine schedule that is right for your child.

Do vaccines cause side effects?

They can. Often, vaccines cause no side effects, but sometimes they do. When side effects happen, they can include:

- Redness, mild swelling, or soreness where the shot was given
- Mild fever
- Mild rash
- Headache or body aches



These side effects do not mean your child is sick, just that their immune system (infection-fighting system) is responding to the vaccine.

Vaccines also sometimes cause more serious side effects, such as severe allergic reactions. But serious side effects are rare.

Ask your child's doctor or nurse what side effects to expect each time your child gets a vaccine. If your child has a reaction or a problem after a vaccine, let the doctor or nurse know.



Should I keep track of my child's vaccines?

Yes. It's important to know which vaccines your child has gotten and when they got them. Many schools and camps need this information before they let a child in. Ask your child's doctor or nurse if they can give you a list. They might also be able to show you how to access this information online.

Can I do anything to help with my child's pain?

Getting a shot can hurt, but usually the pain goes away quickly. There are also things you can do to help reduce your child's pain.

You can:

- **Ask the doctor or nurse about numbing cream** – Putting this cream on your child's skin before a shot can help make it hurt less.
- **Distract your child** – During the shot, it can help to distract your child. You can do this by talking to them, having them blow bubbles, or playing music or a video.
- **Use pain-relieving medicines** – If your child still seems to be in pain after you get home, you can give Panadol or ibuprofen. Before you do this, ask your child's doctor or nurse how much medicine to give and how often to give it.

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