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Polio vaccine protects against polio which causes disability. The signs of polio are a floppy limb or the inability to move.

VACCINES RECOMMENDED FOR ALL CHILDREN GLOBALLY

• BCG (Bacille-Calmette-Guerin) vaccine, which offers partial protection against some forms of tuberculosis and leprosy
• DTP vaccine (also known as DPT vaccine). Diphtheria infection of the upper respiratory tract, which in severe cases may lead to breathing difficulties and death. Pertussis, or whooping cough, affects the respiratory tract and can cause a cough that lasts for four to eight weeks. The disease is very dangerous in infants. Tetanus causes rigid muscles and painful muscle spasms and can be deadly. All pregnant women and infants need to be immunized against tetanus. Immunizing a woman with at least two doses of tetanus toxoid before or during pregnancy protects the newborn for the first few weeks of life and protects the mother. At 6 weeks old, a baby needs the first dose of the tetanus toxoid (the tetanus component of the DTP vaccine) to extend the protection received from the mother against tetanus.

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VACCINES WHICH MAY BE INCLUDED IN NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMMES

• Hepatitis B vaccine - In countries where hepatitis B is a problem, up to 10 out of every 100 children will harbor the infection for life if they are not immunized against Hepatitis B. Up to one quarter of children infected with hepatitis B may develop serious liver conditions such as cancer when they are older.
• Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) and pneumococcal conjugate (PCV) vaccines – In many countries, pneumonia caused by pneumococcal bacteria or Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) bacteria is common and kills many young children. Either of these bacteria can also cause childhood meningitis and other serious infections. These bacteria are among the most dangerous for children. Particularly those under 5 years old. Vaccination with Haemophilus influenzae type B vaccine (Hib vaccine) and pneumococcal (conjugate) vaccine (PCV) can prevent these deaths.
• A pentavalent vaccine (five vaccines in one), combining the DTP, hepatitis B and Hib vaccines, is increasingly being used by national immunization programs in many countries.
• Yellow fever vaccine – In some countries, yellow fever puts the lives of many young children and adults at risk. Vaccination can prevent this disease.
• Rotavirus vaccine – Diarrhea caused by rotavirus is common and can be severe. It affects nearly every child under age 5. Severe rotavirus diarrhea is more common in developing countries where health care can be more difficult to access, resulting in many deaths in children under 5 years old, especially in children under 2. Vaccination against rotavirus prevents diarrhea caused by this virus. However, diarrhea due to other bacteria or viruses can still occur in children who receive the rotavirus vaccine.3

Facts for Life aims to provide families and communities with the information they need to save and improve the lives of children. Parents, grandparents, other caregivers and young people can refer to this practical source of information for answers to their questions related to childbearing and getting children off to the best start in life.

The messages contained in Facts for Life are based on the latest scientific findings by medical and child development experts around the world. The messages contained are also based on human rights, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child and on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

This information empowers people to fulfill the rights of their children. They are also aimed at enabling women, young people and children to exercise and speak out in favor of their rights. The different digests you’ll get throughout the year are filled with practical information about how to ensure children’s rights to survival, growth, development and well-being. The topics address pregnancy, childbirth, major childhood diseases, child development, early learning, parenting, protection, and care and support of children.


The website will be updated regularly and includes a link to an interactive site for posting comments, sharing experiences and materials and discussing relevant issues.
Immunization is urgent. Every child should complete the recommended series of immunizations. Early protection is critical; the immunizations in the first two years are particularly important.

Children must be immunized early in life. It is essential for infants to get all recommended vaccines at the right time. Some vaccines require multiple doses for full protection. It is important for every child to complete the full number of these immunizations. To protect the child during and beyond the first year of life, the immunizations in the following chart are necessary. These are most effective when given before the child reaches ages specified for those vaccines. As a child does not complete the full series of immunizations in the first two years of life, it is extremely important to have the child fully immunized as soon as possible.

As new vaccines become available, more vaccines are recommended for all countries. But some vaccines are only needed in countries where certain diseases are present. Parents and health practitioners should follow the locally recommended immunization schedule. In some countries like the Philippines, additional vaccine doses, called ‘booster shots’, are offered after the first year of life. These help sustain the effectiveness of the vaccines so the child is protected longer.

Immunization protects against dangerous diseases. A child who is not immunized is more likely to become sick, permanently disabled or, at worst, die. Immunization protects children against some of the most dangerous diseases of childhood. A child is immunized by vaccines, which are injected or given by mouth. The vaccines work by building up the child’s defenses against diseases. Immunization only works if given before the disease strikes.

Immunity is not permanent. A child who is not immunized is very likely to get measles, whooping cough and many other diseases that can kill. Children who survive these diseases are weakened and may not grow well. They may be permanently disabled. They may die later from malnutrition and other illnesses.

It is safe to immunize a child who has a minor illness or a disability or is suffering from malnutrition. It is safe for a pregnant woman to be immunized against tetanus. She should be immunized according to this schedule:

- First dose: As soon as she knows she is pregnant.
- Second dose: One month after the first dose, and no more than two weeks before her due date.
- Third dose: Six months to one year after the second dose, or during the next pregnancy.
- Fourth dose: One year after the third dose, or during a subsequent pregnancy.
- Fifth dose: One year after the fourth dose, or during a subsequent pregnancy.

After five properly spaced doses, the mother is protected for life and her children are protected for the first few weeks of life against tetanus.

A new syringe must be used for every person being immunized. Sharing syringes and needles, even among family members, can spread life-threatening diseases. A new syringe must be used for every person. Syringes must be discarded properly and safely after use.

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Disease can spread quickly when people are crowded together.}

Did you know? Breast milk and colostrum, the thick yellow milk produced during the first few days after a woman gives birth, provide protection against diarrhoea, pneumonia, and other diseases. Colostrum is sometimes referred to as a ‘mother’s vaccine’ helping to build the child’s immunity to disease.