

DESIGNER IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULES

Have you heard of parents choosing to “design” their child’s immunization schedule? This may include waiting until their child is older before getting their immunizations (shots) and/or choosing some of the recommended vaccines but not all of them.

These parents may believe that by designing a different immunization schedule, they are doing what is best for their child. However, these decisions are not supported by research and are not recommended by health-care immunizers. They may put your child at risk.

It is very important that children receive all recommended shots on time. The [BC Immunization Schedule](#) is based on scientific research. It is designed to protect children from getting diseases when they are most vulnerable. If we delay giving children their shots on time, we leave them exposed longer to illnesses which can make them very sick.

Timing is important. Following the recommended schedule gives the right protection at the right time. Some vaccines should be given starting at 2 months of age because that is when babies are most at risk. Some vaccines such as whooping cough (pertussis) are given as a series over time in order to build the best protection.

Why do some parents choose to delay or alter immunization schedules? They may worry their baby’s immune system cannot handle more than one shot at a time. Fortunately, there is no need to worry. Babies are exposed to many germs in the environment and their bodies are able to handle this exposure. The same happens with vaccines. A baby can receive many vaccines at the same time without any problems.

Some parents may wonder if a baby’s body can handle all those vaccines without “using up” their immune system? You bet they can! More immune cells are being made all the time. When you give your baby their shots on time, the immune system gets primed to fight off those diseases which might come along.

And remember, it’s perfectly OK for your child to receive several shots at the same appointment. Getting all vaccines for which your child is eligible, both in their combination form and at the same appointment is just as effective as giving separate shots over more appointments. Plus, it means fewer needles for your child and that’s always a good thing!

Every parent wants to do what’s best for their child. So save designers for your wardrobe and not your child’s immunization schedule. Get all your child’s shots on time. If you have any questions about the BC Immunization Schedule or your child’s shots, speak with a public health nurse, your family doctor or nurse practitioner.