

Immunizations for Children in Kindergarten

Children entering kindergarten (age 4-6) are due for routine booster vaccines. Some may also need catch-up immunizations if they are not up to date. Immunizations are the best way to protect children from serious diseases.

Routine Kindergarten Boosters include:

Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Varicella (MMRV)

MMRV vaccine protects against measles, mumps and rubella, and varicella (chickenpox).

Measles, mumps, rubella and varicella viruses are spread through coughing, sneezing, saliva and fluid from chickenpox blisters. Children and adults can become sick by sharing foods or drinks and through close contact.

Measles causes fever, rash, and cold-like symptoms. Measles can lead to infections of the ears and lungs causing seizures, deafness, brain damage and even death.

Mumps causes fever, headaches, and swelling of the glands, cheeks, and testicles. Mumps can cause an infection of the lining of the brain and deafness.

Rubella can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, or birth defects in 9 out of 10 babies born to women infected during pregnancy.

Varicella (chickenpox) complications can lead to swelling of the brain, seizures, deafness, brain damage and death. Infection in early pregnancy can cause miscarriage.

For more information, visit HealthLinkBC:

[#14e Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Varicella \(MMRV\) Vaccine](#)

Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Polio (Tdap-IPV)

Tdap-IPV vaccine protects against:

Tetanus, also known as lockjaw, is caused by a bacteria found in the soil that can enter the skin through a cut or scrape. Up to 1 in 5 people who get tetanus disease may die.

Diphtheria is a serious bacterial infection of the nose and throat. The bacteria is easily spread by coughing, sneezing and close contact. The disease can result in very serious breathing problems. About 1 in 10 people who get diphtheria may die.

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, can cause pneumonia, seizures, brain damage and death. The bacteria is easily spread by coughing, sneezing and close contact.

Polio is a virus spread through contact with bowel movements (stool) of an infected person and from consuming contaminated food or water. Polio can result in paralysis of the arms or legs and can lead to death.

For more information, visit HealthLinkBC:

[#15a Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Polio \(Tdap-IPV\) Vaccine](#)

Catch-up Immunizations:

Children who are not up to date may also need additional vaccines. These may include:

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B vaccine protects against the hepatitis B virus.

Hepatitis B is a virus that attacks the liver. It can cause permanent liver damage, liver cancer and death. The virus is spread through contact with blood or body fluids.

For more information, visit HealthLinkBC:

[#25a Hepatitis B Vaccine](#)

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A vaccine protects against the hepatitis A virus.

Hepatitis A is a virus that attacks the liver. It is spread through contact with bowel movements (stool) of an infected person, through food preparation or other hand-to-mouth contact, and from eating contaminated food and water.

For more information, visit HealthLinkBC:

[#33 Hepatitis A vaccine](#)

Meningococcal C Conjugate (Men-C)

Men-C vaccine protects against one of the most common types of meningococcal bacteria, type C.

Meningococcal C is a bacteria that infects the lining of the brain and can cause brain damage, deafness and death. The bacteria is spread through coughing, sneezing and saliva.

Children and adults can become sick by sharing food or drinks and through close contact.

For more information, visit HealthLinkBC:

[#23a Meningococcal C Conjugate \(Men-C\) Vaccine](#)

Immunizations for Children in Kindergarten

Benefits of Vaccines

Vaccines are highly effective and safe. It is much safer to be immunized than to get the disease. Vaccination protects both your child and the community.

Most vaccine-preventable diseases are now rare in B.C. due to immunization programs. Some, like chickenpox and pertussis, still occur but are usually milder in vaccinated individuals.

Possible Reactions to Vaccines

Common reactions include pain, redness, swelling at the injection site, headache, fever, and tiredness. These are mild and usually last 1–2 days.

A mild fever, a rash that looks like measles, sore joints and swelling of the glands in the face or neck can occur 7–12 days after receiving the MMR vaccine. About 2 weeks after the Varicella vaccine, a mild rash that looks like chickenpox can occur. To prevent spreading the virus to others, the rash should be covered until the blisters have dried and crusted over.

Rarely, MMR can cause febrile seizures (~1 person in 3,000), temporary low platelets (~1 person in 30,000), or encephalitis (brain inflammation (~1 person in 1 million).

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility, less than 1 in a million, of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, breathing problems or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. Should anaphylaxis occur, the public health nurse is prepared to treat it, and the child will be transferred to the nearest emergency department. If these symptoms occur after leaving the clinic, call 9-1-1.

Report any serious or unexpected reactions to your healthcare provider.

Some People Cannot Receive Vaccines

This includes people who have had a life-threatening allergic reaction to a previous dose of a vaccine or to any component of the vaccine. See specific HealthLinkBC Files for more information.

Some people who have an immune system weakened by disease or medical treatment, those who have had a blood transfusion or blood products in the last 11 months and those with untreated active tuberculosis may not be able to have the varicella (chickenpox) or measles, mumps and rubella vaccine(s).

People who developed Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 8 weeks of getting a tetanus vaccine, without any other cause, should not get a tetanus-containing vaccine. GBS is a rare condition that can result in weakness and paralysis of the body's muscles. It can occur after an infection, but in rare cases can also occur after some vaccines.

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness. However, if you have concerns, speak with your public health nurse.

If you have any questions, contact your local public health unit. For more information about the vaccines, visit <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-library/immunizations>

Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or Ibuprofen (e.g. Advil®) can be given for fever or soreness. ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

For more information on Reye Syndrome, see HealthLinkBC File #84 Reye Syndrome.