

# Childhood Vaccines

Vaccines help strengthen your baby's immune system by creating antibodies and immune memory cells that fight disease and infection.

They are sometimes called 'immunizations', 'shots' or 'needles'.



Vaccines help protect against vaccine preventable diseases. Some of the vaccines you might recognize are for measles, mumps, whooping cough, and polio.

## When should vaccines be given?

Since young infants are at greatest risk of severe infection, vaccines are given early - before they are exposed to vaccine preventable diseases. Routine vaccine schedules are based on scientific evidence and offer the most effective protection for your baby. Each province and territory follows a vaccine schedule.

## How are vaccines given?

Most vaccines are given to babies by injection (needle), but some are given orally (by mouth), or intranasally (sprayed directly into the nose).



Ask your healthcare provider about ways to comfort your baby during a vaccination.

## Are vaccines safe?

In order to be approved and recommended for use in Canada, all vaccines go through many years of research to prove their safety and effectiveness. Vaccinations have reduced illness, death, and the spread of vaccine preventable diseases in Canada and around the world.

## Is it important to track vaccinations and schedules?

It is very important to track your baby's vaccinations! Many vaccines need more than one dose over time, so keep a special notebook or save the information. There are also resources such as [CanImmunize.ca](https://canimmunize.ca), where you can save your child's vaccinations in a secure, online digital record.

**PAIN MATTERS!** Your healthcare provider will share ways to **decrease mild, short term side effects** that can sometimes happen after a vaccine. These can include fever, fussiness, redness, or pain at injection site.

### IMPORTANT!

Vaccines are given based on your baby's **chronological age** (their date of birth).

Be sure to get the **right facts** about vaccination from reliable Canadian sources.

Some suggested parent resources include:

*Immunization of Infants Born Prematurely: Canadian Immunization Guide* [Canada.ca](https://Canada.ca)

*Immunize Every Child* [Immunize.ca](https://Immunize.ca)

*Reduce the Pain of Vaccination in Children Under 3 Years: A Guide for Parents* [Immunize.ca](https://Immunize.ca)

*A Digital Vaccination Record for Canadians* [Canimmunize.ca](https://Canimmunize.ca)

*SKIP Solutions for Kids in Pain* [KidsinPain.ca](https://KidsinPain.ca)

Tip: Search full title on the internet



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This infographic was made possible by an educational grant, thanks, in part, to the support of **Sanofi**.