

Rotavirus (Rot/Rot-5) Vaccine

Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.

What is the rotavirus vaccine?

The rotavirus vaccine protects against rotavirus infection. Unlike most vaccines, your child will get the rotavirus vaccine by mouth (instead of with a needle). It is given as a liquid that your child can swallow.

What is rotavirus?

Rotavirus is a common infection that causes fever and vomiting (throwing up). It is usually followed by diarrhea (watery poop). Diarrhea and vomiting caused by rotavirus is also called gastroenteritis. Almost all children who do not get immunized will get the rotavirus infection by age 5 years.

- One in 14 children who get sick with rotavirus need treatment in a hospital.
- Vomiting and diarrhea can cause children to get dehydrated (when the body loses too much water).
- In rare cases, children can die from being dehydrated.

Who is most at risk?

Children age 3 months to 2 years have the highest risk of serious infection.

How does it spread?

Rotavirus spreads through infected stool (poop) when it gets into your mouth from hands, diapers, or things such as change tables or toys.

The virus can live for a long time on surfaces. It can spread before symptoms appear and up to 3 weeks after symptoms start. Some people do not have symptoms but can still spread the disease.

Who should get the rotavirus vaccine?

As part of the routine immunization schedule, babies get this vaccine starting at age 2 months.

How many doses does my child need?

Your child needs either 2 or 3 doses of this vaccine. This vaccine is given by mouth at ages 2 and 4 months or at ages 2, 4, and 6 months.

Check with your public health nurse to find out how many doses your baby needs.

How well does the vaccine work?

The rotavirus vaccine protects your child against gastroenteritis (diarrhea and vomiting) caused by rotavirus infection. Protection is:

- 71% to 87% for any gastroenteritis
- 85% to 98% for severe gastroenteritis

Where can my child get the rotavirus vaccine?

Your child can get the vaccine at your local public health or community health centre.

Are there side effects from the rotavirus vaccine?

There can be side effects from the rotavirus vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- crying or getting upset easily
- fever
- not feeling hungry or not wanting to eat (poor appetite)
- vomiting or diarrhea
- cough or runny nose
- earache

At least 1 out of 100 people who got this vaccine reported 1 or more of these side effects. In some cases, it is unknown if the vaccine caused these side effects.

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

There is a very low risk (1 to 7 cases per 100,000) of intussusception after the rotavirus vaccine. Intussusception is when one part of the intestine slides into another part (like a telescope). This causes a blockage. If this happens, it is usually within 7 days after the first dose. The risk of intussusception is even lower after the second or third dose. Intussusception needs medical treatment and sometimes surgery (see below).

How can I manage side effects?

- If your child has severe stomach swelling or pain, vomiting that will not stop or keeps coming back, blood in their stool, or a high fever, take them to a doctor right away. This could be intussusception.
- There is medicine to help with fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to give. Follow the directions on the package.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your child's doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

Can my child spread the virus after getting the vaccine?

The vaccine virus may be in your baby's poop for up to 10 days after they get the vaccine. Wash your hands carefully after changing diapers and before touching food. The risk of spreading the virus after getting the vaccine is highest around day 7, but this is not common.

Your child can still have the vaccine if they live with someone who is pregnant or has a weak immune system. But anyone with a weak immune system should not change your child's diapers for 10 days after your child had the rotavirus vaccine (if this is possible).

Who should not get the rotavirus vaccine?

Your child may not be able to get this vaccine if:

- They have diarrhea or vomiting. They may need to wait until these symptoms go away before getting the vaccine.
- They have an allergy to any part of the vaccine.

- They had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it.
- They have or may have a weak immune system, for example, because of medicine they take or a health problem.
- They have a family history of a weak immune system.
- They have an inherited problem in their intestines that has not been fixed with surgery, such as a Meckel's diverticulum.
- They have ever had intussusception.

If your child has allergies or has had a side effect from this vaccine, check with your child's doctor or a public health nurse before they get the vaccine.

Tell your child's healthcare provider if you took medicine while you were pregnant or breastfeeding. Some medicines can make your child's immune system weak.

Although your child can get the vaccine if they have a mild illness, such as a cold or fever, they should stay home until they are feeling better to prevent spreading their illness to others.

For more information about immunization



Call Health Link at **811**



Scan the QR code or go to ahs.ca/immunize