

Vaccine Safety Information

Most vaccines are given by an injection (a needle) into the upper arm or thigh. However, some vaccines can be given orally (by mouth) or nasally (sprayed into the nose).²

The most common side effects involve inflammation at the site of vaccination, such as redness, swelling, or pain, as well as fever. These vary by vaccine, but are common.¹⁷ For more information related to immunizations: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/vpd-mev/index-eng.php>.

Please consult with your healthcare provider for specific information on the side effects of specific vaccines. With any medicine, there is always a small chance of an allergic reaction.¹⁷

Reactions usually occur shortly after vaccination. Following immunization, a nurse or doctor will watch for signs of an allergic reaction such as breathing problems, severe swelling or blotchy skin on the body or around the mouth. If you see any of these symptoms talk to your doctor or nurse immediately.²

Some people can recover from diseases that vaccines can help prevent, such as the flu.¹⁸



Please contact your healthcare professional to determine which vaccines are recommended for you or your child.

References:

1. https://www.cpha.ca/sites/default/files/assets/history/cpha100-poster_e.pdf
2. <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/publications/healthy-living-vie-saine/parent-guide-vaccination/index-eng.php>
3. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/health-professionals-flu-influenza.html>
4. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-3-vaccination-specific-populations/page-2-immunization-of-adults.html>
5. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/healthy-canadians/migration/publications/healthy-living-vie-saine/pamphlet-adult-guide-vaccination-adultes-brochure/all/pub-eng.pdf>
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8. <http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/disease-maladie/rubella-rubeole/index-eng.php>
9. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/vpd-mev/varicella-eng.php>
10. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/vpd-mev/diphtheria-diphtherie/symptoms-symptomes-eng.php>
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13. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/poliomyelitis-polio/symptoms.html>
14. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/vpd-mev/hib/symptoms-symptomes-eng.php>
15. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/page-6-hepatitis-a-vaccine.html>
16. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/page-18-rabies-vaccine.html>
17. <https://www.immunize.ca/questions-and-answers>
18. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/symptoms-flu-influenza.html>

Vaccine-preventable Diseases*

Diphtheria can progress quickly. Initial symptoms include fever, chills and sore throat. It can cause thick mucus to be produced and swelling that can block airways. In some cases, it can lead to temporary muscle paralysis.¹⁰

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) can cause ear, sinus and lung infections (pneumonia).¹⁴

Hepatitis A can range from a mild illness lasting 1 to 2 weeks to a severely disabling disease lasting several months. Symptoms in adults and older children typically include abrupt onset of anorexia, nausea, fatigue, fever and jaundice.¹⁵

Hepatitis B can cause jaundice, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain. Complications can include cirrhosis of the liver and can sometimes cause liver cancer.²

Influenza (the flu) symptoms typically include the sudden onset of high fever, cough, loss of appetite, fatigue and sore throat. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea may also occur, especially in children. Adults 65 years of age or older and adults and children with chronic conditions can develop severe complications such as pneumonia.³

Measles (rubeola) is caused by a virus and early symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, sleepiness and irritability. Small white spots may also appear inside the mouth. A rash develops on the face and can spread down the body.⁶

Meningococcal disease can cause high fever, severe headache, nausea, vomiting, bruises on the skin, a blood infection and meningitis, an infection of the lining around the spinal cord and brain.²

Mumps is an infection caused by a virus. Symptoms can include a fever, headache or earache, tiredness, sore muscles, dry mouth, trouble talking, chewing or loss of appetite. The main symptom of mumps is painful swelling in the cheeks and neck.⁷

Pertussis (whooping cough) can cause severe coughing fits (“whooping” sound) that can lead to choking or vomiting. It can last for weeks or months. Children under 1 year old are most susceptible.¹²

Pneumococcal disease can cause pneumococcal meningitis, pneumonia, ear, sinus and blood infections.²

Polio can cause fever, nausea, aching muscles, and tiredness, loss of appetite and stiff neck or back. In less than 1% of cases, polio can damage a person’s nervous system.¹³

Rabies is a rare viral infection transmitted to humans most often through the bite of an infected mammal. Early symptoms of rabies may include headache, malaise, fever and fatigue and, if left untreated, is almost always fatal.¹⁶

Rotavirus symptoms can include fever, vomiting and severe diarrhea which can lead to dehydration requiring hospitalization.²

Rubella (German measles) is an infectious disease that causes a low-grade fever, rash, joint pain and swollen glands. Although a mild illness in most people, the virus in a pregnant woman can cause a miscarriage or cause infection in the fetus that can result in fetal malformations.⁸

Shingles (herpes zoster) is a result of reactivation of the varicella zoster virus (VZV), a DNA virus of the Herpesvirus family, which, as a primary infection, causes varicella (chickenpox). Shingles is characterized by pain, burning, numbness or tingling, sensitivity to touch, and a blistering, itchy rash occurring on one side of the body.⁵

Tetanus (lockjaw) is an infection spread by bacterium. This infection can affect the nerves that control your muscles. They become stiff and painful and make swallowing and breathing difficult.¹¹

Varicella (chickenpox) is a generalized viral disease caused by a virus called varicella zoster. Varicella can cause a slight fever, followed by a headache, runny nose and a general feeling of malaise. The defining symptom is the eruption of skin lesions on all areas of the body.⁹

The Value of Vaccines

In the last 50 years, vaccination has helped save more lives than any other health intervention in Canada.¹



* For a complete list of vaccine-preventable diseases, please consult your healthcare professional.

Vaccines Can Help Save Lives Against Vaccine-preventable Diseases

- In the last 50 years, vaccination has helped save more lives than any other health intervention in Canada.¹
- One hundred years ago, infectious diseases were the leading cause of death worldwide. In Canada, infectious diseases now cause less than 5% of all deaths due to immunization programs across the country.¹
- Immunization can help protect you and your family from vaccine-preventable diseases.²
 - Vaccines will not fully protect everyone who receives them, as some people may only get partial protection from the vaccine. For those who get only partial protection, they may develop mild symptoms if exposed to a disease, but will not suffer severe complications.²



In Canada, it is estimated that annually there is an average of 12,200 hospitalizations related to influenza and approximately 3,500 deaths attributed to influenza.³



Children less than 5 years old, adults 65 years of age or older, adults and children with chronic conditions, pregnant women, residents of nursing and chronic care facilities and Indigenous peoples can be at most risk for influenza-related complications.³



The most effective way to help protect yourself from the flu is by getting an annual flu vaccine.³ Talk to your healthcare professional.



Prevention of Infection by Immunization Is Not Just for Children

- Vaccines are your best protection against vaccine-preventable diseases.^{2,3}
- Adults require immunization to restore waning immunity against some vaccine-preventable diseases and to establish immunity against other diseases that are more common in adults.⁴
- When most people in a community have been immunized against a disease, the chance of an outbreak of that disease is greatly reduced. This protects people vulnerable to the disease, such as babies too young to be immunized, people undergoing chemotherapy, the elderly, and people who cannot be immunized for medical reasons.⁵

- Nearly all vaccine-preventable diseases are contagious. Some, like shingles (also known as herpes zoster), are a reactivation of a previous infection, in this case, chickenpox. Shingles can cause great pain and inconvenience in your daily life, while other infections have even more severe complications and can be fatal.⁵

Your best defense is to get all recommended vaccines at the right time. Talk to your healthcare provider about what vaccines are recommended for you.⁵



Selected vaccine-preventable diseases

	Name of vaccine	Date of appointment	Given by (initials)	Date of next dose due (if needed)
1	Hepatitis A			
2	Hepatitis B			
3	HPV (human papillomavirus)			
4	Influenza			
5	Meningococcal			
6	MMR (mumps, measles, rubella)			
7	Pneumococcal disease			
8	Polio			
9	Rotavirus			
10	Shingles (herpes zoster)			
11	Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, with pertussis)			
12	Varicella (chickenpox)			
13	Others			

Ask your healthcare provider or local public health office to learn more about immunization for you and your family.