

NEWBORN BABIES, IMMUNITY AND IMMUNISATION

Adapted from the Immunisation Advisory Centre website – www.immune.org.nz

New born babies, and breast feeding

A baby receives many antibodies from its mother before it is born. These cross the placenta and enter the baby's blood stream. Whooping cough antibodies are an exception, as they do not cross the placenta. Babies are born without any material antibody protection against whooping cough.

Breast fed babies receive extra antibodies from the first breast milk. However, antibodies from the mother last about 3 months. The mother's antibodies slowly disappear from the baby's blood stream.

Breast feeding does not protect a baby against most of the serious illnesses such as diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. It does, however, protect against diarrhoea and vomiting, and against coughs and colds.

What are vaccines?

A vaccine contains a weakened or dead germ that *cannot cause disease*. It stimulates the body to make antibodies against infection and works as if it met the full strength or live germ that would make you sick. The body keeps a pattern of this new antibody for the future which it can QUICKLY use in the future should it meet the full strength germ. These antibodies protect from the disease. This is called *immunisation*.

RECOMMENDED IMMUNISATIONS FOR CHILDREN

There is a standardised course of immunisations for children, including booster shots. It is important that the full course is completed, including boosters later on, to ensure continuing strong protection. A delay in receiving any vaccination can make a child unnecessarily vulnerable to infection.

Age Due	DTaP-IPV	Hib-HepB	MeNZB ¹	Hib	HepB	MMR	dTap-IPV	Influenza ³
6 weeks	✓	✓	✓					
3 months	✓	✓	✓					
5 months	✓		✓		✓			
10 months			✓					
15 months				✓		✓		
4 years	✓					✓		
11 years							✓ ²	

KEY: Vaccine Key Inactivated polio vaccine (IPV); diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis (DTaP) – child, (dTap) – adolescent/adult; *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib); hepatitis B (Hep B); meningococcal B (MeNZB); measles, mumps, rubella (MMR); tetanus, diphtheria – adult (Td); tuberculosis (BCG)

*Pertussis is commonly known as whooping cough.

¹ MeNZB™ will continue to be recommended for everyone under 5 years of age until there is clinical evidence to warrant cessation.

² Polio vaccine for those who have not yet had 4 documented doses of polio vaccine.

³ Influenza vaccination for adults and children from 6 months old with certain chronic medical conditions – see Immunisation Handbook (Ministry of Health).

Note: These childhood vaccines are prescription medicines and provided *free of charge* by healthcare professionals.

Additional Notes

- **Children who are born to mothers who carry the hepatitis B virus need an extra hepatitis B vaccination at birth**
- **Children who are born very prematurely (less than 29 weeks gestation or less than 1000g) are recommended to have an extra dose of Haemophilus influenza vaccine with the hepatitis B vaccine at 5 months**
- **Children who have chronic health problems may be eligible for influenza vaccine yearly**
- **Children who come from countries with high rates of tuberculosis, and those who have tuberculosis within their families may be eligible for the BCG vaccine at birth**
- **Children with a splenectomy or high risk of invasive pneumococcal may be eligible for additional vaccines**