National vaccine schedule

In Nepal, a comprehensive vaccination schedule safeguards children from several harmful diseases. Starting at birth, newborns receive the Bacillus Calmette Guerin (BCG) vaccine to combat tuberculosis. At 6, 10, and 14 weeks, the DPT-HepB-HiB vaccine tackles diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, hepatitis B, and Haemophilus influenzae type b. Additionally, Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) is administered at these intervals to protect against polio.

To further strengthen protection against pneumonia and its related complications, pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) is given at 6 and 10 weeks, with a final dose at 9 months. At 14 weeks, infants receive the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) for further polio prevention. Measles and rubella are addressed through the MR vaccine at 9 and 15 months. Children receive the Japanese Encephalitis (JE) vaccine at 12 months to shield them from this brain infection.

Pregnant women also play a crucial role in child health. To safeguard both mother and child, two doses of the Tetanus Diphtheria (Td) vaccine are administered with a month's interval during pregnancy.

By following this comprehensive vaccination schedule, parents and healthcare providers work together to ensure children and expectant mothers in Nepal receive vital protection against a range of preventable diseases.

1. Get your child vaccinated! The National Immunization Program offers free vaccines against various diseases at District Hospitals, Primary Healthcare Centers, Health Posts, and during campaigns through Female Community Health Volunteers.
2. Every child qualifies! No documents are needed to enjoy these free vaccinations.
3. Need more info? Contact your nearest District Health Office, District Hospital, Primary Health Care Centre, or Health Post.
4. Program managed by: Child Health Division, Department of Health Services, Teku, Kathmandu.

What is immunization?
Immunization is the process by which a person's body becomes protected against a specific infectious disease. This protection is achieved through the introduction of a vaccine.

Why aren't all vaccines 100% effective?
Vaccines are designed to generate an immune response that will protect the vaccinated individual during future exposures to the disease. Individual immune systems, however, are different enough that in some cases, a person’s immune system will not generate an adequate response. Therefore, he or she will not be effectively protected after immunization.

What Do Vaccines Do?
Vaccines work by preparing the body to fight illness. Each vaccine contains either a dead or a weakened germ (or parts of it) that causes a particular disease.

Will the Immune System Be Weaker By Relying on a Vaccine?
No, the immune system makes antibodies against a germ, like the chickenpox virus, whether it encounters it naturally or through a vaccine. Being vaccinated against one disease does not weaken the immune response to another disease.

Can a Vaccine Give Someone the Disease It's Supposed to Prevent?
It's impossible to get the disease from any vaccine made with dead (killed) bacteria or viruses or just part of the bacteria or virus.

Does My Child Need Vaccines if All the Other Kids in School Are Immunized?
It is true that a single child's chance of catching a disease is low if everyone else is fully vaccinated (immunized). But your child is also exposed to people other than those at school. And if one person thinks about skipping vaccines, chances are that others are thinking the same thing. Each child who isn't immunized gives highly contagious diseases one more chance to spread.

Can Getting So Many Vaccines at One Time Harm My Baby?
Babies have stronger immune systems than you might think, and they can handle far more germs than what they receive from vaccines. In fact, the amount of germs in vaccines is just a small percentage of the germs babies' immune systems deal with every day.
Why Should My Child Get a Painful Shot if Vaccines Aren't 100% Effective?

Few things in medicine work 100% of the time. But vaccines are one of the most effective weapons we have against disease — they work in 85% to 99% of cases. They greatly reduce your child's risk of serious illness (particularly when more and more people are vaccinated) and give diseases fewer chances to take hold in a population.

Why Do Healthy Kids Need to Be Immunized?

Vaccinations are intended to help keep healthy kids healthy. Because vaccines work by protecting the body before disease strikes, if you wait until your child gets sick, it will be too late for the vaccine to work. The best time to immunize kids is when they're healthy.

Can Vaccines Cause a Bad Reaction in My Child?

The most common reactions to vaccines are minor and include:

- redness and swelling where the shot was given
- fever
- soreness at the site where the shot was given

In rare cases, vaccines can trigger more serious problems, such as seizures or severe allergic reactions. If your child has a history of allergies to food or medicine, or has had a problem with a vaccine before, let the doctor know before any vaccines are given. Every year, millions of kids are safely vaccinated and very few experience serious side effects.

Do Vaccines or Thimerosal Cause Autism?

No. Many studies have found no link between vaccines and autism. Likewise, a groundbreaking 2004 report from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) found that thimerosal (an organic mercury compound that's been used as a preservative in vaccines since the 1930s) does not cause autism.

Wasn't There a Problem With the Rotavirus Vaccine?

Rotavirus is one of the most common causes of diarrhea in young children. In 1999, a rotavirus vaccine was taken off the market because it was linked to an increased risk for intussusception, a type of bowel problem, in babies.

Do Vaccines Cause SIDS, Multiple Sclerosis, Or Other Problems?

There are concerns, many of which circulate on the Internet, linking some vaccines to multiple sclerosis, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and other problems. To date, studies have not shown any connection between vaccines and these conditions. The number of SIDS cases has actually fallen by more than 50% in recent years, while the number of vaccines given yearly continues to rise.

Why Do Kids Need Vaccines for a Disease That's Been Eliminated?

Diseases that are rare or wiped out in the United States, like measles and polio, still exist in other parts of the world. Doctors continue to vaccinate against them because it's easy to come into contact with illnesses through travel — either when Americans travel abroad or when people who aren't fully immunized come to the United States.

How Long Does Immunity Last After Getting a Vaccine?
A few vaccines, like the two for measles or the series for hepatitis B, may make you immune for your entire life. Others, like tetanus, last for many years but require periodic shots (boosters) for continued protection against the disease.

How Are Vaccines Studied and Improved?
The FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research is the government agency that regulates vaccines in the United States. Working with the CDC and the NIH, they continuously research and monitor vaccine safety and effectiveness.

Where Can I Get Affordable Vaccines for My Child?
Vaccines are one of the best tools we have to keep kids healthy. But they work best when everyone gets them. Vaccines are now required to be covered by health insurance plans at no cost to the patient. Some plans only cover vaccines when they are given by your doctor or at specific locations. So check with your insurance company to make sure. You can also get inexpensive or free vaccines through many local public health clinics and community health centers, and campaigns to vaccinate kids often hold free vaccination days

Where Can I Learn More About Vaccines?
Read this article for details about each recommended vaccine. You also can visit the CDC's National Immunization Program website for more information about vaccinations. And talk with your doctor about which vaccines your kids need. Working together, you can help keep your family healthy.

What are the benefits of immunization for my child?
Immunization protects children against certain severe and preventable diseases by administering vaccines and oral drops. If not tackled by immunization, these diseases may lead to infections that could seriously affect the child’s health and even result in death.

Does my child have natural protection against diseases?
Babies are born with natural protection from their mother while in the womb and after birth through breastfeeding but only against some diseases. This protection gradually begins to fade as they grow, making them vulnerable to certain conditions.

Immunization by vaccines and oral doses boost this declining immunity and protect their health.

How do vaccines protect my child from disease-causing organisms?
Vaccines protect against different infections through activating a protective substance in the blood (known as “antibodies”), which kills the disease-causing organisms or neutralises their effect when they enter the body.
Vaccines contain a weaker/killed/partial form of the disease-causing agent (bacteria or virus). When introduced into the child’s body, they activate a protective response against a targeted pathogen by generating specific antibodies without causing the disease itself to the child.

Does the protection due to vaccination stay for the child’s entire life?
The protection developed after vaccination usually lasts for many years and can protect from the disease in most cases. Even if the child does get the disease after being vaccinated, the symptoms will be much milder than symptoms in a child who was never vaccinated against the disease.

At what age should immunization start for any child?
Under the Universal Immunization Programme, immunization for children starts as soon as a child is born. Vaccination against childhood tuberculosis (BCG), polio (OPV) and maternally transmitted Hepatitis B (Hep B vaccine) are given to a child immediately after birth.

Why is timely vaccination important for my child?
Vaccines give maximum protection when provided at the right age and in the required number of doses. Children are susceptible to certain diseases at a certain age.

Why are some vaccines not administered to children who have reached a certain age?
The child's age at the time of administration of a particular vaccine is based on research and data. Usually, vaccines are given to children at the most susceptible age to getting infected.

What should be done if there is a delay in getting the child vaccinated?
If due, for some reason, there is a delay in receiving a vaccine or any dose of vaccines, vaccination should be provided as early as possible.
Please contact the ASHA in your area and ANM to ensure that your child receives the pending vaccines. It is essential to understand that there is no need to restart the entire schedule in case of delay. Instead, the remaining program should be continued as recommended and completed.

How much will it cost to get my child vaccinated?
Vaccines are costly, and the Government spends a lot of money procuring them, storing and transporting them at the correct temperature.
However, all immunization services, including vaccines, syringes, mother and Child protection cards, and medicines and supplements (Paracetamol, ORS, Zinc and Vitamin A), are given free at government health facilities. Similarly, immunization services for pregnant women are also provided free of charge at government health facilities.

Where can we get our children vaccinated?
You can visit any government health facility, including hospitals, medical colleges, urban dispensaries, Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Community Health Centres (CHCs), sub-centres and Anganwadi Centres, get your children vaccinated.

What vaccines are given to a newborn?
According to the National Immunization Schedule, one dose of each of these three vaccines - OPV, BCG and Hepatitis B are given to newborns irrespective of the place of delivery.

We had heard of cases when a child suffered from a disease although they had been vaccinated against it. If so, what is the use of taking vaccines?
Vaccines have been used for a long time and have proven effective. But like any other medicine, no vaccine is 100% effective. The level of protection generated by a vaccine may vary from one child to another due to differences in the immune system's response.

If any child has got infected or has suffered from some disease in the past, will they still require vaccination against that disease?
Yes. Most diseases (for example, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Rotavirus diarrhoea, Hib pneumonia and Japanese Encephalitis) only result in short-term protection even after full-blown infection and illness. Therefore, in these cases, a child will still require all recommended doses of the vaccine as per the immunization schedule.

What precautions should I take after getting my child vaccinated?
You must wait for half an hour at the session site after vaccination to ensure immediate care and response in case there is any minor adverse event.

- Continue breastfeeding or complementary feeding after vaccination, even after oral vaccines.
- You must ensure that no medicine or herb is applied to the injection site.
- Consult the ANM/vaccinator or the medical officer of any government health facility nearby if your child develops any adverse event.

My child was delivered by surgery (caesarean section) and was born before nine months. Can they be vaccinated?
Yes, your child must be vaccinated as per the National Immunization Schedule. Vaccination should be provided to all children. It does not matter if:

- They are delivered by surgery, or it is standard delivery.
- They are delivered at a private or government health facility or home.
- They are delivered before completing nine months of gestation.
- The mother is suffering from any medical condition.
- The child is underweight at the time of birth.

Can vaccines cause allergy?
Some children may be allergic to certain vaccines or components (like antibiotics or preservatives), and vaccine administration in such children can result in an allergic reaction, like itching or the appearance of red spots on the body after vaccination.
If there is any history of allergy, please ensure to take medical advice from a qualified medical practitioner before any immunization.

What are vaccines?
Vaccines are products that are usually given in childhood to protect against serious, often deadly diseases. By stimulating your body's natural defenses, they prepare your body to fight the disease faster and more effectively.

How do vaccines work?
Vaccines help your immune system fight infections more efficiently by sparking your immune response to specific diseases. Then, if the virus or bacteria ever invades your body in the future, your immune system will already know how to fight it.

Are vaccines safe?
Vaccines are very safe. Your child is far more likely to be hurt by a vaccine-preventable disease than by a vaccine. All vaccines go through rigorous safety testing, including clinical trials, before they are approved for the public. Countries will only register and distribute vaccines that meet rigorous quality and safety standards.

Why should I vaccinate my child?
Vaccines save lives. Measles vaccines alone are estimated to have prevented over 21 million deaths between 2000 and 2017.
Vaccines will help protect your child against diseases that can cause serious harm or death, especially in people with developing immune systems like infants.

It’s important to vaccinate your child. If not, highly contagious diseases such as measles, diphtheria and polio, which were once wiped out in many countries, will come back.

Can my baby handle all of these vaccines?
Yes. Many parents worry that multiple vaccines will overload their child’s immune system. But children are exposed to hundreds of germs every day. In fact, a common cold or sore throat will put a greater burden on your child’s immune system than vaccines.

What is herd immunity?
If enough people in your community are immunized against a certain disease, you can reach something called herd immunity. When this happens, diseases can’t spread easily from person to person because most people are immune. This provides a layer of protection against the disease even for those who cannot be vaccinated, such as infants.

Can a vaccine cause my baby to get sick?
Vaccines are extremely safe and serious side effects are rare. Almost all sickness or discomfort after vaccination is minor and temporary, such as a soreness at the injection site or mild fever. These can often be controlled by taking over-the-counter pain medication as advised by a doctor, or applying a cold cloth to the injection site. If parents are concerned, they should contact their doctor or health care provider.

What diseases do vaccines prevent?
Vaccines protect your child against serious illnesses like polio, which can cause paralysis; measles, which can cause brain swelling and blindness; and tetanus, which can cause painful muscle contractions and difficulty eating and breathing, especially in newborns. For a list of the most common vaccines and the diseases they prevent, see this list of the most common vaccines and the diseases they prevent.

Can I delay the vaccine schedule?
One of the best ways you can protect your child is to follow the recommended vaccine schedule in your country. Any time you delay a vaccine, you’re increasing your child’s vulnerability to disease.

Can I let my child get the chickenpox instead of getting the vaccine?
Although chickenpox is a mild disease that many parents will remember from childhood (the vaccine was introduced in 1995), some children will develop serious cases with complications that can be fatal or cause permanent disabilities. The vaccine eliminates

the risk of complications from the disease, and prevents children from infecting their siblings, friends and classmates.

What is the recommended vaccine schedule?
Immunization schedules vary by country depending on which diseases are most prevalent. You can find an overview of the recommended vaccines and approximate dates from your local health centre, doctor or your government's Ministry of Health.

Why are shots so important?
Shots (also known as immunizations or vaccines) protect your child from fifteen serious, and sometimes deadly, diseases. These diseases are listed below in the order they appear on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule:

- Hepatitis B
- Rotavirus
- Diphtheria
- Tetanus (lockjaw)
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Haemophilus Influenzae type b (Hib)
- Pneumococcal
- Polio
- Influenza (flu)
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella (German measles)
- Varicella (chickenpox)
- Hepatitis A
- Meningococcal

Are these diseases very serious?
Yes. Even though we might not think of some diseases as serious because we don't see them as often, vaccine-preventable diseases can still be deadly. For example, before vaccines were routinely given:

- Measles killed hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people a year.
- Diphtheria killed over 10,000 people a year in the 1920s.
- Polio disabled and killed tens of thousands of kids in the 1940s and 1950s.

More common illnesses can be serious as well. Chickenpox hospitalized 12,000 people and killed about 100 people each year before vaccination was available. Rotavirus is the most common form of diarrhea in kids worldwide. It infects almost all U.S. kids by age 5 and is responsible for about 250,000 hospitalizations every year in this country.

Are shots safe?
Yes, shots are safe. Like any medicine, however, they are not 100 percent risk free. Vaccines can sometimes cause mild reactions, like a sore arm or a mild fever. Serious reactions are rare, but they can happen. Your doctor or nurse will talk to you about these before giving a vaccine. You must decide which risk you want to take--the risk of getting a vaccine-preventable disease or the risk of getting a vaccine. Because the risks of the diseases are serious and because serious reactions from vaccines are rare, we believe that choosing to vaccinate is typically the safer risk to take.

How do vaccines work?
When a person gets an infection, the body reacts by producing antibodies. These antibodies fight the disease and help the person recover from the illness. Antibodies stay in the body, even after the disease is gone, and protect the person from getting the same disease again. This is called immunity.Vaccines work in a similar way, by preparing your child's immune system to fight a disease without actually giving your child the disease. When a child gets a vaccine, her or his body makes antibodies against the disease. These antibodies will recognize and fight the real disease if she or he is ever exposed to it.

Why are vaccines given at such a young age? Why so many at one visit?
Babies will need several vaccinations starting at birth. They need immunizations early and often get several shots at one visit. This is because a baby's immune system is like an eggshell--strong, yet fragile. It's strong because it can handle many immunizations at the same time. It's fragile because when babies get a vaccine-preventable disease they can have serious side effects.
Remember:

- Infants and toddlers are more likely than older kids to become very ill from diseases that vaccines prevent.
- The sooner babies are protected by immunization, the better.
- Only a very small part of a baby's immune system is "used" to make antibodies.
- A baby's immune system can easily handle many vaccines at one visit without being overloaded.
- Vaccines make the immune system stronger.

Why does my baby need so many doses of some vaccines and not as many of others?
The number of doses your baby needs depends on if the vaccine is “live” (but weakened) or “killed” (inactivated). Live vaccines are very effective and usually provide life-long protection with only one or two doses. Killed vaccines need several doses to build immunity. “Boosters” of some vaccines are needed later in life (and sometimes

throughout life) to maintain protection. Children should get their first shot at birth, before leaving the hospital (hepatitis B). Then at each well-child visit, they should get more shots, sometimes up to six at one visit. To find the recommended immunization schedule for children aged 0-6 and 7-18 (and for adults 19 and older), visit CDC's website.

Are infants completely immune to disease?
No. Newborn babies often have immunity to some diseases because they have antibodies from their mothers (called maternal antibodies). However, maternal antibody immunity is only temporary and may not occur at all if the mother does not have immunity herself.

Do breastfed babies need to be immunized?
Yes. Despite the known benefits of breastfeeding, such as enhanced protection against some colds, ear infections, and diarrhea, breastfeeding does not prevent vaccine-preventable diseases. Unlike vaccines, breastfeeding does not stimulate the infant's own immune system to produce the antibodies needed to fight very specific diseases. Fortunately, vaccines do not interfere with the beneficial immunity gained from breastfeeding, just as breastfeeding does not hinder the effectiveness of immunization.

Isn't it expensive to get all these shots?
No, shots don't have to be expensive. When you take your child (aged 0-18 years) to a health clinic in Washington State, you might have to pay a small charge for getting the shot and for the office visit, but you will not be charged for the vaccine itself. Also, clinics that get state-supplied vaccine are forbidden by law from denying your child a shot because you cannot pay.

Why should I immunize my child?
Immunization is the single most important way parents can protect their children against serious diseases. The decision to immunize your child is an important one. Consider the following reasons when making your decision.
Immunize:

- To prevent common but serious illnesses. Some diseases, like pertussis (whooping cough), flu, varicella (chickenpox), and rotavirus, are very common in the U.S. Choosing not to vaccinate is a choice to risk getting a serious and sometimes deadly disease.
- To prevent diseases that still exist. Some diseases, like measles and mumps, still occur in the U.S. at low levels. If fewer people are immunized against these diseases, outbreaks can occur.

- To prevent diseases that are common in other parts of the world. Although some diseases, like polio, are rare or do not exist in the U.S., they are still common in other parts of the world. With frequent international travel, these diseases are literally only a plane ride away.
- To protect others in your family and community. By immunizing your child, you also protect those who:
    - Have weak immune systems.
    - Are not fully immunized.
    - Cannot get shots because of a medical condition or because they are too young or too old.

Will my child get sick if I don't immunize him?
Maybe. If kids are never exposed to any of these diseases, they won't get sick. If unimmunized kids are exposed to any of these diseases, there's a good chance they'll get the disease. What happens then depends on the child and the disease. At the least, kids could get a mild rash and have to stay home from child care or school for a few days. On the other hand, they may become sick enough to be hospitalized, suffer a permanent disability, or die.
If kids gets one of these diseases, they could also spread it to other kids who aren't protected. If there are enough unprotected kids in your community, it could lead to an epidemic, with many kids getting sick.

What happens during an outbreak if my child is not immunized?
There is a good chance your child could catch the disease and spread it to others during an outbreak. Your child can be legally excluded from child care and school for the duration of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease that he or she is not immunized against.
What if my child didn't get her shots when she was supposed to, or has gotten behind schedule?
Kids who didn't begin their immunizations at age two months, or who have had only some of their shots, can still be immunized. It's never too late to start getting immunizations! If kids have had only some shots, they don't have to start over--the shots already given will count. Simply continue the schedule where you left off. If you have children who weren't immunized when they were infants, contact your doctor, nurse, or clinic. They can tell you when to bring kids in for which vaccinations.

What COVID-19 vaccines are available this fall?
This fall, an updated COVID-19 vaccine will be available. Health Canada approved the Moderna SPIKEVAX and the Pfizer-BioNTech XBB mRNA COVID-19 vaccine on September 12, 2023 and September 28, 2023, respectively. The updated Moderna and

Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines target the XBB1.5. variant and are expected to produce a stronger immune response to currently circulating COVID-19 variants. While it is recommended to receive a dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine, people may choose to receive the bivalent COVID-19 vaccine that was approved last fall. People who choose to receive a dose of one of the bivalent COVID-19 vaccines approved last fall should speak with their health care provider about what is best for them.

When will the updated COVID-19 vaccine be available at Ottawa Public Health Clinics?
Ottawa Public Health received the first shipment of the updated COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccines the week of September 25, 2023 and began distribution of these to hospitals and long-term care homes. Ottawa Public Health will offer the updated XBB.1.5-containing COVID-19 mRNA vaccines beginning with high-risk groups as follows:
Beginning October 11, 2023, the updated COVID-19 vaccines will be available for eligible residents including:

- Individuals at high-risk for influenza (flu) and/or COVID-19 related complications or hospitalization include:
    - Residents and staff of congregate living settings (e.g., chronic care facilities, retirement homes)
    - Pregnant individuals
    - Individuals who are 65 years of age or older
    - First Nation, Inuit or Métis people and their household members
    - All children 6 months to under 5 years of age (for influenza-risk)
    - Individuals 6 months of age and older with underlying health conditions per NACI
    - Members of racialized and equity deserving communities
- Health care workers and first responders

Beginning October 30, 2023, the updated COVID-19 vaccines will be available for all residents.

How many doses of the updated COVID-19 vaccine do I need?
The number of doses of the updated COVID-19 vaccine you need depends on your age and whether you have already received a COVID-19 vaccine.
People 5 years and older:

- People 5 years and older, who have received a COVID-19 vaccine in the past and people who have never received a COVID-19 vaccine are recommended to receive one dose of the updated XBB 1.5-containing COVID-19 mRNA vaccine

this fall. The updated COVID-19 vaccine is recommended 6 months from the last COVID-19 vaccine dose or known COVID-19 infection (whichever is later).

People 6 months to under 5 years:

- Have not received a COVID-19 vaccine: people 6 months to under 5 years of age who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine in the past are recommended to receive either 2 doses of the Moderna XBB 1.5-containing mRNA COVID-19 vaccine 2 months (56 days) apart or 3 doses of the Pfizer XBB 1.5-containing mRNA COVID-19 vaccine with 2 months (56 days) between doses.
- Have received a COVID-19 vaccine: people 6 months to under 5 years of age who have completed a COVID-19 vaccine primary series with either 2 doses a Moderna or 3 doses of a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine are recommended to receive one dose of the updated XBB 1.5-containing COVID-19 mRNA vaccine 6 months after their last dose. People 6 months to under 5 years of age who have not completed their primary series are recommended to complete it with the updated XBB 1.5-containing COVID-19 mRNA vaccine.

What is a recombinant protein subunit vaccine?

A recombinant protein subunit vaccine is a type of vaccine that uses harmless and purified proteins of the virus to trigger an immune response in the body. The immune response means our body will recognize and fight the virus if ever exposed. Some protein subunit vaccines, such as Novavax, also have adjuvants. An adjuvant is a substance that is added to the vaccine to help create a stronger and longer lasting immune response.

How many doses of the updated Novavax COVID-19 vaccine do I need?

The number of doses of the updated XBB 1.5-containing Novavax COVID-19 vaccine that you need depends on the number of COVID-19 vaccines you have had in the past.

- If you have received 2 or more COVID-19 vaccines in the past: it is recommended you receive 1 dose at least 168 days after your previous dose
- If you have received 1 COVID-19 vaccine in the past: it is recommended you receive 1 dose at least 56 days after your previous dose
- If you have not received any COVID-19 vaccines in the past: it is recommended you receive 2 doses with at least 56 days between doses

How can I get the Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine?

You cannot book through the provincial portal. Booking will be through your local public health unit. Use this online form to register for a Novavax COVID-19 vaccine.

What information is there regarding Myocarditis and or pericarditis following vaccination?
The clinical trial data shows that there have been mild cases of myocarditis and or pericarditis reported after receiving the Novavax Nuvaxovid COVID-19 vaccine. According to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), it is unclear whether these cases are indicative of a safety signal. Post-market safety surveillance, which is routinely done, is required to determine whether this is an adverse event of interest associated with Novavax Nuvaxovid.

Are there any contraindications or special precautions for the Novavax vaccine?
At the time of approval, there are no known serious warnings or precautions associated with the Novavax Nuvaxovid COVID-19 vaccine.
Allergy to ingredients in a vaccine or its container is considered a contraindication. A potential allergen found in the Novavax vaccine is polysorbate 80. This is found in several medical preparations like vitamin oils, tablets, anticancer agents, and also in cosmetic products. For a full list of ingredients please see Novavax Nuvaxovid COVID-19 vaccine.

What are the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination for you and your baby?

Getting the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine helps prevent serious illness, hospitalization, and complications from COVID-19 infection.
Getting the vaccine helps prevent complications or bad outcomes for parent and baby. Most pregnant people who get COVID-19 will have mild symptoms. However, pregnant people are at an increased risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 including needing to be hospitalized and admitted to the intensive care unit compared to those who are not pregnant.
People who have a COVID-19 infection in pregnancy are also at increased risk of giving birth too early (preterm birth), having a caesarean delivery and having a baby admitted into a neonatal intensive care unit.

What are the side effects of receiving an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine?

Pregnant and breastfeeding individuals who receive the mRNA (Comirnaty/Pfizer-BioNtech or Moderna) vaccines experience the same side effects of vaccination as non-pregnant individuals.
Common side effects after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine are pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, and muscle pain. This is caused by the immune system's normal response to the vaccine. These side effects usually last a few days and go away on their own.

What if I am planning a pregnancy?

There is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines have any effect on your fertility or chances of becoming pregnant. Fertility treatment is not a medical reason that prevents you from getting vaccinated.

I am concerned about reports of myocarditis or pericarditis following the COVID-19 vaccine. What information is there?

Myocarditis is an inflammation of the heart muscle. Pericarditis is an inflammation of the lining around the heart. Symptoms can include:

- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- heart palpitations (fluttering or pounding of the heart)

There have been reports of myocarditis and/or pericarditis after immunization with mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in Canada and internationally. Cases of myocarditis and/or pericarditis occur more often in people under 30 years of age, more often in males than in females, and more often after a second dose of an mRNA vaccine than after a first or booster dose. The risk of myocarditis/ pericarditis is rare, and events usually occur within a week after vaccination and mostly have been mild with a quick recovery.

Can getting a COVID-19 vaccine affect menstruation or fertility?

It is not clear if the COVID-19 vaccine can affect your periods. But getting sick with COVID-19 can affect your periods. Studies looking at whether there is a link between menstrual cycles and the COVID-19 vaccine are underway. As per the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, if COVID-19 vaccines do affect the menstrual cycle, it would be expected to affect only one to two cycles. Getting sick can affect your periods and severe illnesses like COVID-19 can affect your cycle for much longer.

What do I do if I or someone I support has a needle phobia or fear but would still like to get a COVID-19 vaccine at a clinic?

If you or someone you are supporting has a needle fear, phobia or anxiety, community clinic staff can support.

To accommodate individuals with severe needle phobia, please fill out the COVID-19 Vaccine accessibility assessment form.

1. A clinic nurse or OPH representatives will call the client and/or their contact person to introduce themselves The clinic nurse will explain the vaccination process step-by-step - from the time they enter the clinic to when they leave
2. The nurse can offer a private room or isolated space for the vaccination. If necessary, we can also arrange for a place for the client to lie down during the

vaccination. Also, an accompanying family member/friend and/or things like stuffed animals are allowed throughout the appointment.

3. Lastly, the nurse will ask the client/their contact if there are specific steps we might take which could help with the client's anxiety
4. Accommodation requests can be made by completing the COVID-19 Vaccine accessibility assessment form.

Is it possible to experience post-COVID-19 (also known as long COVID) health conditions?

You never know how COVID-19 will affect your health after the acute illness has passed. Most people with COVID-19 get better in a few weeks. Some take longer to recover or have problems during recovery.

Anyone can experience post-COVID-19 health conditions (also referred to as long COVID, long-haul COVID, post-acute COVID-19, long-term effects of COVID, or chronic COVID). This includes people who did not have symptoms while they had COVID-19. Every person is different.

How can I reduce the risks of COVID-19 transmission in indoor spaces?

Exhaled breath, whether from breathing, speaking, singing, shouting, etc., contains a variety of sizes of particles - respiratory droplets or aerosols - some of which are big enough that they fall quickly to the ground.

Some of which are small enough that they can stay in the air for various lengths of time. COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through direct contact into the mouth, nose, or eyes with the exhaled respiratory droplets or aerosols which carry the virus from an infected person. Ventilation indoors with fresh air provides an important additional layer of protection. Ventilation with fresh air should be improved whenever possible, e.g., bringing in more fresh air through a properly maintained ventilation system or by opening windows and doors. Reducing the risk of transmission while indoors by wearing a mask or face covering and ensuring a distance of two metres (six feet) from those outside your household, continue to be important basics.

How do heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems affect the transmission of COVID-19?

A well-maintained HVAC system may help reduce transmission of COVID-19 by exchanging indoor air, into which people have exhaled, with fresh outdoor air and by filtering recirculated air.

Because of mechanical and structural complexity and cost, improved ventilation may need to be a longer-term goal, th ough adjustments to maximize air exchanges and filtration efficiency within the specifications of the existing HVAC system should be made as soon as possible.

If possible, consult an HVAC professional to determine:

- If your HVAC system is operating properly
- If it can be adjusted to increase air exchange
- If it is using the most effective type of filters compatible with its system.
- If it is suitable for the size of your space and its intended use

Can people with severe allergies to a component of the COVID-19 vaccine receive the vaccine?

As per the Ministry of Health COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance, people with known allergies to components of the COVID-19 vaccine may speak with a physician or nurse practitioner to determine whether and how they should receive a COVID-19 vaccine. The physician or nurse practitioner can help create a vaccination care plan to ensure you receive the vaccine safely.

If you have a known severe allergic reaction to a component in one of either the Moderna Spikevax or Comirnaty (Pfizer-BioNtech) vaccines and can't interchange your subsequent dose, you will be able to receive the appropriate vaccine at one of our clinics.

If a person develops an adverse reaction, what should be done?

If someone experiences an adverse event following immunization, they should report it to a healthcare professional (e.g., family doctor).

An adverse event following immunization (AEFI) is an unwanted or unexpected health effect that happens after someone receives a vaccine, which may or may not be caused by the vaccine.

Public health surveillance of AEFIs is important for timely detection of rare vaccine safety issues. For more information visit the OPH page on AEFI reporting.

Expected side effects for each vaccine product are listed on the vaccine product monograph; common side effects could be found under 'Side effects and risks'.

Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I recently got another vaccine or if I am due for another vaccine?

NACI recommends that COVID-19 vaccines may be given at the same time as, or before or after other vaccines for anyone 6 months of age or older. This includes live, non-live, adjuvanted, and non-adjuvanted vaccines. There are no specific safety concerns when routine vaccines are given at the same time or within days of each other. Please note that there could be stronger, temporary side effects when a COVID-19 vaccine and another vaccine are given at the same time or within days of each other.

What vaccines protect against COVID-19?

All COVID-19 vaccines, listed by WHO as for emergency use or prequalified, provide protection against severe disease and death resulting from COVID-19 infection.
There are several types of COVID-19 vaccines, including:

- Inactivated or weakened virus vaccines: These use an inactivated or weakened version of the virus that doesn't cause disease but still generates an immune response,
- Protein-based vaccines: These contain harmless fragments of proteins or protein shells that mimic the COVID-19 virus to safely generate an immune response,
- Viral vector vaccines: These use a safe virus that cannot cause disease but serves as a vehicle to produce coronavirus proteins to generate an immune response, and
- RNA and DNA vaccines: These are genetically engineered RNA or DNA which create proteins that safely activate an immune response.

- One dose for those who have never received any COVID-19 vaccine, especially those who are at high risk of severe illness such as older persons, adults with chronic diseases, individuals with immunocompromising conditions and health workers with direct patient contact.
- One dose for pregnant persons, during each pregnancy.
- Revaccination 6 to 12 months after the most recent dose for older adults, adults with comorbidities, persons who are immunocompromised and health workers with direct patient contact.

There are very few conditions that would exclude someone from being vaccinated. You should NOT be vaccinated if:

- You have a history of severe allergic reactions/anaphylaxis to any of the ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccines, or
- You have a fever over 38.5 ºC on the day of your vaccine appointment. Postpone until you have recovered.

Do I need to be revaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine?
The WHO SAGE Roadmap recommends revaccination according to the following:
Revaccination 6 to 12 months after the most recent dose for:

- adults over 75 or 80 years old
- adults over 50 or 60 years old with comorbidities
- adults, adolescents and children who are immunocompromised

Revaccination 12 months after the most recent dose for:

- adults over 50 or 60 years old

- adults with comorbidities
- health workers with direct patient contact

For pregnant persons, a single dose is recommended in each pregnancy.

Can children and adolescents get vaccinated against COVID-19?
Healthy children and adolescents ages 6 months to 17 years belong to the low-priority group for COVID-19 vaccination. Vaccinating them at this stage of the pandemic has limited public health impact. Countries can consider vaccinating this group based on disease burden, cost-effectiveness and other public health priorities.
Children and adolescents at higher risk of severe COVID-19 (those who are immunocompromised, with severe obesity or with comorbidities) and never received COVID-19 vaccination should get one dose.

Do all COVID-19 vaccines protect against virus variants?
Yes, all WHO emergency-use listed or prequalified COVID-19 vaccines provide protection against severe disease and death from circulating COVID-19 variants. Any of the approved COVID-19 vaccines can be used either for the initial series or revaccination.
Vaccination should not be delayed in anticipation of newer versions of the COVID-19 vaccine. For people at a high risk of getting severe COVID-19, a dose of any available vaccine is more beneficial than delaying vaccination.

Should I be vaccinated if I have had COVID-19?
A person who had a prior COVID-19 infection and is recommended for vaccination, according to the recent SAGE Roadmap, should still be vaccinated.
Vaccination is recommended for those who have never received any COVID-19 vaccine and are at high risk of severe illness such as older persons, adults with chronic diseases, individuals with immunocompromising conditions and health workers with direct patient contact. Pregnant persons should get one dose.

Can I be revaccinated with a vaccine different from my previous dose?
It is safe for you to receive a COVID-19 vaccine different from the one used for the previous dose(s).
If you're offered a different type of vaccine, you can go ahead and get vaccinated. Depending on the type of vaccine, using a different type of vaccine may provide better protection than using the same type of vaccine.

Can I still get COVID-19 after I have been vaccinated?

Yes. While COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against serious disease and death, no vaccine is 100% effective.
Vaccinated people can get infected and may fall ill with COVID-19. This is known as a 'breakthrough infection' or 'breakthrough case'. Breakthrough infections can happen with any vaccine and do not mean that the vaccine does not work.

How do we know that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective?

WHO's Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (GACVS) monitors how approved vaccines behave in the real world to identify any signals of adverse events following immunization. GACVS is an independent group of experts providing authoritative, scientific advice to WHO on vaccine safety issues of global or regional concern.
Unprecedented scientific collaborations allowed COVID-19 vaccine research, development, and authorizations to be completed in record time – to meet the urgent need for these vaccines during the acute phase of the pandemic – while maintaining high safety standards.
Vaccines must be proven safe and effective in large Phase III clinical trials to prove that they meet internationally agreed benchmarks for safety and efficacy before they are introduced in national immunization programs.

What are the side effects of COVID-19 vaccines?

Like with any vaccine, some people will experience mild to moderate side effects after being vaccinated against COVID-19. This is a normal sign that the body is developing protection.
Side effects of COVID-19 vaccines include fever, tiredness, headache, muscle ache, chills, diarrhoea and pain or redness at the injection site.
Not everyone will experience side effects. Most side effects go away within a few days on their own. You can manage any side effects with rest, plenty of non-alcoholic liquids and taking medication to manage pain and fever, if needed.

Should I get vaccinated against COVID-19 if I am breastfeeding?

If you are breastfeeding, you should get vaccinated against COVID-19 with the available vaccine according to your national recommendations.
None of the current COVID-19 vaccines have live virus in them. This means there is no risk of you passing COVID-19 to your baby through your breastmilk. In fact, the antibodies you get after vaccination may go through your breast milk and help to protect your baby.

Should I get vaccinated if I want to have a baby in the future?

Yes, you should get vaccinated if you are planning to get pregnant.

There is no evidence that suggests the COVID-19 vaccines interfere with fertility. There is currently no biological evidence that antibodies from COVID-19 vaccination or vaccine ingredients could cause any problems with reproductive organs.

What is vaccination?

Vaccination is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting you against harmful diseases, before you come into contact with them. It uses your body's natural defenses to build resistance to specific infections and makes your immune system stronger.

How does a vaccine work?

Vaccines reduce risks of getting a disease by working with your body's natural defenses to build protection. When you get a vaccine, your immune system responds. It:

- Recognizes the invading germ, such as the virus or bacteria.
- Produces antibodies. Antibodies are proteins produced naturally by the immune system to fight disease.
- Remembers the disease and how to fight it. If you are then exposed to the germ in the future, your immune system can quickly destroy it before you become unwell.

When should I get vaccinated (or vaccinate my child)?

Vaccines protect us throughout life and at different ages, from birth to childhood, as teenagers and into old age. In most countries you will be given a vaccination card that tells you what vaccines you or your child have had and when the next vaccines or booster doses are due. It is important to make sure that all these vaccines are up to date.

Why should I get vaccinated?

Without vaccines, we are at risk of serious illness and disability from diseases like measles, meningitis, pneumonia, tetanus and polio.
Two key reasons to get vaccinated are to protect ourselves and to protect those around us. Because not everyone can be vaccinated – including very young babies, those who are seriously ill or have certain allergies – they depend on others being vaccinated to ensure they are also safe from vaccine-preventable diseases.

What diseases do vaccines prevent?

Vaccines protect against many different diseases, including:

- Cervical cancer
- Cholera
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria

- Ebola virus disease
- Hepatitis B
- Influenza
- Japanese encephalitis
- Measles
- Meningitis
- Mumps
- Pertussis
- Pneumonia
- Polio
- Rabies
- Rotavirus
- Rubella
- Tetanus
- Typhoid
- Varicella
- Yellow fever

Who can get vaccinated?

Nearly everyone can get vaccinated. However, because of some medical conditions, some people should not get certain vaccines, or should wait before getting them. These conditions can include:

- Chronic illnesses or treatments (like chemotherapy) that affect the immune system;
- Severe and life-threatening allergies to vaccine ingredients, which are very rare;
- If you have severe illness and a high fever on the day of vaccination.

What is in a vaccine?

All the ingredients of a vaccine play an important role in ensuring a vaccine is safe and effective. Some of these include:

- The antigen. This is a killed or weakened form of a virus or bacteria, which trains our bodies to recognize and fight the disease if we encounter it in the future.
- Adjuvants, which help to boost our immune response. This means they help vaccines to work better.
- Preservatives, which ensure a vaccine stays effective.
- Stabilisers, which protect the vaccine during storage and transportation.

Are vaccines safe?

Vaccination is safe and side effects from a vaccine are usually minor and temporary, such as a sore arm or mild fever. More serious side effects are possible, but extremely rare.
Any licensed vaccine is rigorously tested across multiple phases of trials before it is approved for use, and regularly reassessed once it is introduced. Scientists are also constantly monitoring information from several sources for any sign that a vaccine may cause health risks.

Are there side effects from vaccines?

Like any medicine, vaccines can cause mild side effects, such as a low-grade fever, or pain or redness at the injection site. Mild reactions go away within a few days on their own.
Severe or long-lasting side effects are extremely rare. Vaccines are continually monitored for safety, to detect rare adverse events.

Can a child be given more than one vaccine at a time?

Scientific evidence shows that giving several vaccines at the same time has no negative effect. Children are exposed to several hundred foreign substances that trigger an immune response every day. The simple act of eating food introduces new germs into the body, and numerous bacteria live in the mouth and nose.

Is there a link between vaccines and autism?

There is no evidence of any link between vaccines and autism or autistic disorders. This has been demonstrated in many studies, conducted across very large populations. The 1998 study which raised concerns about a possible link between measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and autism was later found to be seriously flawed and fraudulent. The paper was subsequently retracted by the journal that published it, and the doctor that published it lost his medical license. Unfortunately, its publication created fear that led to dropping immunization rates in some countries, and subsequent outbreaks of these diseases.

Should my daughter get vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV)?

Virtually all cervical cancer cases start with a sexually transmitted HPV infection. If given before exposure to the virus, vaccination offers the best protection against this disease. Following vaccination, reductions of up to 90% in HPV infections in teenage girls and young women have been demonstrated by studies conducted in Australia, Belgium, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Is a COVID-19 vaccine necessary?

COVID-19 can be a minor illness in some or lead to severe disease or even death in previously healthy people. This means everyone should take the virus seriously. It is believed that the more people who get vaccinated, the less sickness will be in our communities.

Many treatments and medications are being studied, but there is no cure. Prevention is key.

Vaccination is an important step in helping to prevent this illness and its potentially devastating consequences.

COVID-19 vaccine recommendations are based on three things:

- Your age
- The vaccine you first received.
- The length of time that has passed since your last dose.

What is severe COVID-19 and am I at risk for it? I f I am at risk, what can I do to protect myself?

COVID-19 can affect anyone, and the disease can cause symptoms ranging from mild to very severe. Severe COVID-19 is when someone gets so sick from COVID-19 that they need to be hospitalized or put in the intensive care unit, they may need a breathing machine (ventilator) or may even die. We know that are more likely to get very sick with COVID-19. We also know that certain settings and activities can make you more likely to get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 and most importantly that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Staying up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines is the best way to protect yourself and others around you from getting very sick, being hospitalized, or dying from COVID-19.

When deciding to vaccinate against COVID-19, other factors to consider include:

- The local COVID-19 hospital admission level, especially if it is high.
- Which COVID-19 variant is most common and if it is causing illness.

Have the recommendations changed for the COVID-19 vaccines?

- On September 11, 2023, the FDA approved/authorized the 2023 – 2024 COVID-19 Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. On October 3, the FDA authorized the 2023 – 2024 Novavax vaccine for people 12 years of age and older. The ACIP and CDC have made recommendations for the use of these vaccines.

• CDC recommends everyone 6 months of age and older get the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine if it has been at least two months since your last COVID-19 vaccine.

Does it matter if my child receives Moderna or Pfizer?
No. Both vaccines are safe and effective. If your child is 6 months – 4 years of age, two doses of Moderna are recommended to complete the primary series and three doses of Pfizer are recommended. These are the number of doses that are studied by the manufacturer, authorized by the FDA, and recommended by the CDC. People can choose whether they want the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines. For current information on the types and use of COVID-19 vaccines available

Are the COVID-19 vaccines given to children the same as the vaccines given to adults?
The COVID-19 vaccines for children have the same active ingredients as the vaccines given to
adults. However, some children receive a smaller, age-appropriate dose that is the right size for
them. The smaller doses were rigorously tested and found to create the needed immune
response for each age group. Children should get the vaccine made for their age group.
Why should children receive the COVID-19 vaccine?
The COVID-19 vaccine will prevent children from getting seriously sick if they do get COVID-19
and it will also:
• Protect children with underlying medical conditions from getting severely ill from COVID- as well as children without underlying medical conditions who can also experience severe illness.

What are the recommendations regarding the new 2023-2024 COVID-19 Vaccine?
The recommended vaccine type and number of updated (2023–2024 Formula) COVID-19 vaccine doses are based on age and vaccination history. For more information speak with your health care provider and visit, Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC.

What about those 65 years of age and older?
It is especially important for people 65 years of age and older to receive one updated 2023 – 2024 COVID-19 vaccine. However, additional doses of the vaccine are not recommended at this time.

What does it mean to be “up to date” with COVID-19 vaccines?

• Everyone 5 years and older are up to date with COVID-19 vaccines if they have received one 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine dose. • Children aged 6 months through 4 years are up to date when all recommended doses have been received, including at least one dose of the 2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccine. • Individuals 65 years of age and older are up to date once they have received one dose of the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine. Additional doses of the vaccine are not recommended currently. • People who got the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine are up to date when they receive the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine doses approved for their age group or when they get one updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine. • People who got the Johnson & JohnsonCOVID-19 vaccine are up to date when they get one updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine. • Individuals who are severely or moderately immunocompromised are up to date once they complete a three-dose initial series with at least one dose of the 2023 – 2024 COVID-19 vaccine. They may receive one or more additional 2023 – 2024 COVID-19 vaccine doses at least two months after the last dose.

Why are vaccines important for those with weakened immune systems?
If you are moderately or severely immunocompromised (have a weakened immune system),
you are at increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness and death. Additionally, your immune
response to COVID-19 vaccination may not be as strong as in people who are not immunocompromised. Talk with your health care provider to see which vaccines are right for
You.

What vaccines are recommended for people with weakened immune systems?
• Everyone aged 6 months and older who has a weakened immune system needs at least
one dose of the 2023-2024 updated Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Depending on
the number of Pfizer or Moderna doses you've previously received, you may need more than one dose of updated vaccine.
• People aged 12 years and older with weakened immune systems who are not vaccinated and are unable or choose not to get an updated Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19
vaccine can consider Novavax COVID-19 vaccine.
• Speak with your health care provider about the timing, type, and dose of your updated, 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine.

For more information, visit Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC and COVID-19
Vaccines for People Who Are Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised | CDC.

What are the side effects of the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine?

In clinical trials, most symptoms were mild to moderate, typically began one to two days after vaccination, and ended after one to two days. The most common side effects experienced by all age groups included: pain, soreness and or swelling where the injection was given, tiredness, muscle aches, headaches, irritability and crying in younger children. Severe allergic reactions were rare.

What if I or my loved ones have had an allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, can I still get the vaccine?

If you or a loved one have had an allergic reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine, you may still be able to receive a COVDID-19 vaccine. Before scheduling a vaccine appointment, speak with your health care provider to determine if you are eligible and what options you may have.

What about heart problems like myocarditis and pericarditis?

• The risk of having a serious reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine is very low. Rare cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the outer lining of the heart) have been reported. New studies have shown the rare risk of myocarditis and pericarditis associated with mRNA COVID-19 vaccination—mostly among males between the ages of 12 and 39 years—may be further reduced with a longer time between the first and second dose.
• ACIP and CDC determined that the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination (e.g., prevention of COVID-19 and its severe outcomes) outweigh the rare risk of myocarditis and pericarditis in all populations recommended for vaccination. If you currently have heart problems or have had heart problems speak with your health care provider about getting the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe?

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. To date, hundreds of millions of people have safely
received a COVID-19 vaccine under the most intense safety monitoring. Getting
the COVID-19 vaccine is much safer than getting sick with COVID-19.

Vaccine Effectiveness.
Where can I learn more about vaccine safety and how to report a side effect? What has changed with the safety monitoring systems for COVID-19 vaccines?
On May 19, 2023, CDC closed enrollment in v-safe for COVID-19 vaccines. CDC is developing a
new version of v-safe which will allow users to share their post-vaccination experiences with
new vaccines. Also, there are different systems that are still in place to monitor vaccine safety,
including the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System.
For more information, visit, Ensuring COVID-19 Vaccine Safety in the US | CDC.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect the menstrual cycle (period)?
Results from recent research studies show that people who menstruate may observe small,
temporary changes in menstruation after COVID-19 vaccination, including:
• Longer duration of menstrual periods
• Shorter intervals between periods
• Heavier bleeding than usual.
Despite these temporary changes in menstruation, there is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines
cause fertility problems.

Are COVID-19 vaccines effective?
• COVID-19 vaccination reduces the risk of COVID-19 and its potentially severe complications. All COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for use in the United States helped protect people against COVID-19, including severe illness, in clinical trial settings.
• In addition to providing protection against COVID-19, there is increasing evidence that COVID-19 vaccines also provide protection against COVID-19 infections without symptoms (asymptomatic infections). COVID-19 vaccination can reduce the spread of disease overall, helping protect people around you.
For more information, visit COVID-19 Vaccines are Effective, CDC.

If I had COVID-19 and recovered, do I need to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

• Getting a COVID-19 vaccine after you recover from COVID-19 infection provides added
protection against COVID-19. You may consider delaying your vaccine by three months from when your symptoms started or, if you had no symptoms, when you received a positive test.
• People who already had COVID-19 and do not get vaccinated after their recovery are more likely to get COVID-19 again than those who get vaccinated after their recovery.
If I am currently sick with COVID-19 illness, can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?
• No. Anyone currently infected with COVID-19 should wait to get vaccinated until after their illness has resolved and after they have met the criteria to discontinue isolation.
• In addition, people who have had a known COVID-19 exposure should not seek vaccination until their quarantine period has ended to avoid potentially exposing health care personnel and others during the vaccination visit.
• Talk to your doctor if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

If a person recovered from multisystem inflammatory syndrome in adults (MIS-A) or children
(MIS-C), can they still get vaccinated?
• The CDC recommends that individuals with a history of MIS-A or MIS-C get vaccinated
against COVID-19 as the benefits outweigh the risks of potential recurrence or myocarditis, provided they meet specific criteria which include a return to normal heart function and a minimum of 90 days after diagnosis of MIS-C or MIS-A.
• For those who do not meet the criteria, the decision to vaccinate should be left to their health care provider. Other factors like clinical recovery, medical therapies, age, and existing medical conditions must also be considered

Tags	Questions	Responses
Rubella, German Measles	What is rubella?	Rubella, also known as German Measles, is caused by the rubella virus.
Symptoms	What are the symptoms of rubella?	Symptoms include diffuse rash, fever, headache, malaise, swollen lymph nodes, respiratory issues, and conjunctivitis. The rash typically lasts 3 days, but some may not experience it.
Pregnancy Risk	Why is rubella dangerous for pregnant women?	Rubella infection during pregnancy can cause birth defects in the developing fetus (Congenital Rubella Syndrome).

Transmission	How is rubella transmitted?	Through contact with infected individuals' respiratory secretions (droplets) or direct contact. It's highly contagious for a week before and after the rash appears.
Prevention	How can I prevent rubella?	- Vaccination: MMR vaccine is recommended. - Pregnant women: Check immunity status before pregnancy and vaccinate if needed. - General hygiene: Wash hands, maintain good ventilation, avoid close contact with sick individuals.
Management	What should I do if I have rubella?	Isolate for 7 days after the rash appears, especially avoiding pregnant women.
Travel Advice	What if I travel to areas with rubella outbreaks?	- Vaccination: MMR vaccine is crucial. Check your vaccination history. - Pregnant women: Avoid travel to outbreak zones. - Non-immune individuals: Consult a doctor for MMR vaccination (except pregnant women).
Children and Travel	Can children with one MMR dose travel to outbreak zones?	Generally, one dose offers long-term protection. Hong Kong recommends a two-dose regimen.
Infants and Travel	Can I travel with a child under 1 year to outbreak zones?	Not recommended. They are susceptible and lack MMR vaccination at this age. Consult a doctor if travel is necessary.
Pregnant women and Travel	Should pregnant women avoid outbreak zones?	Yes. Consult a doctor to confirm immunity status. Avoid travel if non-immune.
Symptoms after Travel	What if I develop symptoms after returning from a rubella-affected area?	Seek immediate medical attention and avoid contact with non-immune individuals, especially pregnant women and infants. Inform healthcare providers about travel history.
Vaccination for Foreign Domestic Helpers	Do foreign domestic helpers need MMR vaccination?	Yes, if non-immune. Preferably before arriving in Hong Kong.
Rubella Vaccine History in Hong Kong	When was the vaccine introduced and what's the current schedule?	Refer to the infographic "Learn more about rubella vaccine" for details.
Contraindications for MMR Vaccine	Who shouldn't receive the MMR vaccine?	Individuals with severe allergic reactions to past doses, severe immunosuppression, or pregnant women.
MMR Campaign Purpose	Why is the Measles-Rubella vaccination campaign being conducted?	To protect children from measles and rubella, highly contagious diseases. Measles is deadly (49,000 deaths annually in India), and rubella causes birth defects.
Target Audience	Who should get the MR vaccine during the campaign?	All children between 9 months and 15 years, regardless of prior measles/MR/MMR

		vaccination.
Campaign Locations	Where is the MR vaccination campaign taking place?	- Schools (initial weeks)
Additional Dose Safety	Child already received measles/rubella vaccines. Is the extra MR dose harmful?	No, the additional dose strengthens immunity and is safe.
MR Vaccine Safety	Is the MR vaccine safe, especially the one used in the campaign?	Yes, highly safe and effective. Used in 150 countries. Same vaccine as routine immunization. Over 22 crore children in India safely vaccinated.
MR Vaccine Side Effects	Are there any side effects of the MR vaccine?	Possible mild, temporary side effects: pain/redness at injection site, low fever, rash, muscle aches.
Vaccination During Minor Illness	My child has a mild fever. Can they receive the MR vaccine?	Yes, children with minor illnesses like mild respiratory infection, diarrhea, or low fever can be vaccinated.
Missed Vaccination	My child missed the school vaccination. What now?	Children can get vaccinated at government health facilities or select private facilities.
MR vs. Routine Vaccination	My child's routine MR vaccination is due soon. After the campaign dose, do they still need it?	Yes, campaign doses are additional. Continue routine vaccination schedule (9-12 months and 16-24 months).
Boys and Rubella Vaccination	Rubella targets birth defects. Why vaccinate boys?	Boys can contract and transmit rubella if not immune. Both boys and girls need MR vaccination routinely and during campaigns.
Contraindications	Who should not be vaccinated?	Children with high fever, serious illness, hospitalization, or a history of severe allergic reaction to measles/rubella vaccine. Immunocompromised children or those on immunosuppressants need doctor clearance.
Global Use of Measles and Rubella Vaccines	Are Measles and Rubella vaccines used globally?	Yes, for decades. The Americas eliminated measles and rubella through childhood vaccination.
Diseases	What are measles and rubella?	* Measles: Highly infectious, causing illness and complications like diarrhea, pneumonia. * Rubella: Milder but contagious, causing birth defects or death in the unborn child of infected pregnant women.
Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS)	What is congenital rubella syndrome (CRS)?	A set of birth defects caused by rubella infection in early pregnancy (usually first trimester), leading to blindness, deafness, heart defects, mental retardation, etc.
MR Vaccine Purpose	Why is the measles-rubella vaccine given?	* Prevents both measles and rubella in children.

	* Aims to eliminate measles and control rubella/CRS in the country.	
MR Vaccine Effectiveness	Does this vaccine give lifelong protection?	* Yes, in most children.
	* Two doses provide protection against both diseases.	
Combined Vaccine Effect	Does combining measles and rubella (MR) affect vaccine efficacy?	* No, efficacy remains the same as separate administration.
MR Vaccine Safety	Are there any side effects of MR vaccination?	* Possible mild, temporary side effects: pain/redness at injection site, low fever, rash, muscle aches.
MR Vaccine Reconstitution	How much diluent is used for MR vaccine reconstitution?	* Use the entire supplied diluent (e.g., for 10 doses). * This accounts for unavoidable vaccine wastage due to factors like needle/hub space and vaccine sticking to the vial.
MR Campaign	What is the MR campaign and why is it conducted?	* A special campaign to vaccinate children aged 9 months to 15 years with one MR dose * Targets all children, regardless of prior vaccination or measles/rubella infection. * Goal: Increase population immunity (reach 100% target) to reduce measles cases, deaths, and CRS disabilities. .
Vaccination Sites	Where will children be vaccinated during the campaign?	* Schools (initial weeks) * Health centers, Anganwadi centers, outreach sessions, mobile posts (later weeks)
Who Should Be Vaccinated?	Who should be vaccinated?	* All children between 9 months and 15 years old, regardless of previous vaccination status. * Malnourished children are prioritized due to higher complication risks. * Children with minor illnesses (mild respiratory infection, diarrhea, low fever) can be vaccinated.
Who Should Not Be Vaccinated?	Who should NOT be vaccinated?	* Children with high fever, serious illness (unconsciousness, convulsions), or hospitalization.
	* Children with a history of severe allergic reaction to previous measles/rubella vaccines.	
MR vs. MMR Vaccination	Why MR and not MMR vaccination?	* Measles is a significant public health concern, while mumps evidence is

		insufficient.
	* MR vaccine is chosen to address the more pressing issue.	
Campaign Dose vs. Routine Vaccination	Does the child need the campaign dose even if they have routine vaccinations?	* Yes, all children in the target age group receive the campaign dose.
	* The campaign dose is additional to routine vaccination.	
MR Vaccination During Menstruation	Can a menstruating girl receive the MR vaccine?	* Yes, vaccination is safe during menstruation.
MR Campaign Dose After Recent Routine Vaccination	An 11-month-old received a routine measles vaccine a week before the campaign. Should they get the campaign dose?	* Yes, the child should still receive the campaign MR dose.
	* There is no added risk from the second dose.	
	* The child should still receive the routine 2nd dose at 16-24 months.	
Future Routine Doses After Campaign Dose	Will the child receive future routine MR doses?	* Yes, the child receives routine MR doses as per the National Immunization Schedule.
Minimum Interval Between Vaccinations	What is the minimum time gap between routine and campaign vaccination?	* The campaign dose is given irrespective of the last routine dose.
	* This is a one-time activity, and an extra dose poses no harm.	
	* Routine vaccination can resume after 28 days of the campaign dose.	
Multiple Vaccinations	Is it safe to give multiple injections at once?	Yes, it's safe. Many countries, including India, follow schedules where children receive multiple vaccines during a single visit.
Multiple Vaccinations and Side Effects	Do multiple injections increase the risk of adverse events?	No. Studies show no increased risk of side effects from receiving multiple vaccinations at once.
Spreading Out Vaccinations	Is separating and spreading out vaccinations safer?	No. Giving all vaccinations at once is safer. Spreading them out leaves children unprotected longer and requires waiting 4 weeks between specific live vaccines.
Measles Vaccination During MR Campaign	Should a child due for a measles vaccine during the campaign receive it?	No. Measles vaccination is withheld during the campaign period in Routine Immunization (RI) sessions.
	Children won't receive measles/MR/JE vaccines during RI.	
	However, healthcare workers (ANMs)	

	should ensure the child receives the MR campaign dose.	
Routine Doses After Campaign Dose	Will a child receive future routine MR doses after the campaign dose?	Yes. Children still receive routine MR doses as per the National Immunization Schedule, regardless of the campaign dose.
MR Vaccine Before 9 Months	Does a child need to repeat the vaccine if they received it before 9 months?	Yes. The recommended schedule requires MR-1 at 9-12 months and MR-2 at 16-24 months.
MR Vaccine Age Limit	Until what age can children receive the MR vaccine under Routine Immunization?	Two doses are given at 9-12 months and 16-24 months. However, if a child misses a scheduled dose, they can receive the MR vaccine up to 5 years old.
MMR Vaccine	What is MMR vaccine?	Live virus vaccine containing weakened measles, mumps, and rubella viruses to induce immunity without causing the diseases.
MMR Vaccination Schedule	When are children vaccinated?	Two MMR doses: - 1st at 12 months of age. - 2nd at 18 months (often MMRV combining measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella).
Early MMR Vaccination	Can infants under 12 months be vaccinated for travel?	Yes, at 6 months or older: - Pre-travel dose is free. - May be provided if exposed to measles.
MMR Vaccine Effectiveness	How effective is the MMR vaccine?	- Single dose: 95% (measles), 78% (mumps), 99% (rubella). - Two doses: 99% (measles), 88% (mumps).
Contraindications for MMR Vaccination	Who shouldn't be vaccinated?	- Infants under 6 months. - Pregnant women. -Immunocompromised individuals. - People with severe allergic reactions to MMR or its components.
MMR Vaccine for Uncertain Vaccination History	Is it safe to get another MMR vaccine?	Yes, unless contraindicated (see above).
MMR Vaccine Booster Dose	Is a booster dose needed?	No, two MMR doses provide lifelong protection.
Breakthrough Measles Cases	Can vaccinated individuals still get measles?	Yes, about 1% of people with two doses may contract measles upon exposure.
MMR Vaccination Before 1966	Why not recommended for pre-1966 individuals?	Natural childhood infection likely provided immunity.
Pregnant women get rubella	can pregnant women get rubella vaccine?	No, pregnant women should not get the rubella vaccine.