

Eyes on



# Vaccines

Your child's best shot against disease



PARENTS



CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Early Childhood Development



***“Vaccines have helped to reduce infant deaths.”***

## What do we know?

- At one time many children died or were seriously harmed by childhood diseases. Today your child can receive a vaccines that will protect him from these diseases for a long time.
- Vaccines don't just protect your child. They stop diseases from spreading to those who haven't been vaccinated. Here are some examples of how vaccines have helped children:
  - Vaccines have helped to reduce infant deaths.
  - Smallpox and polio have practically disappeared because of vaccines. Measles has been cut by more than 99% in Western countries.
  - Some diseases can harm the way a child develops (for example, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussus, congenital rubella and mumps). These diseases have been cut by 90% in Canada because of vaccines.
  - Meningitis is a disease that can cause death. Children who have had mumps have a 5% chance of getting meningitis. Children who get the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine have less than a 1 in 800,000 chance of getting meningitis.
- Vaccines have been so successful at getting rid of disease that some people no longer fear the diseases.
- However, it is better to get your child vaccinated than run the risk of getting one of the serious diseases that vaccines prevent.
- Vaccination side effects are minor. The area that was vaccinated may be a bit sore, red and swollen, but can easily be relieved. Serious side effects are extremely rare.
- You may have heard reports that autism is linked to the MMR vaccine. Research has shown that there is no link between autism and vaccines.
- You do not have to worry that vaccines contain thimerosal, a preservative made with mercury. Thimerosal was used in vaccines from 1930 to 1998. Today most vaccines given to children do not contain thimerosal.

Paying attention to...

What can be done?

... learning about the benefits and side effects of vaccines.

- Consult the following websites:
  - Canadian Paediatric Society [www.cps.ca](http://www.cps.ca)
  - Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion [www.immunize.cpha.ca](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca)
  - Health Canada [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/iyc-vve/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/iyc-vve/index-eng.php)

... getting your child vaccinated according to schedule so that he gets the full benefits of the vaccines.

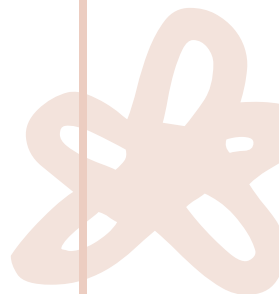
- In Canada, refer to the schedule proposed by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). See page 93 of the online guide: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/pdf/cig-gci-2006\\_e.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/pdf/cig-gci-2006_e.pdf)

... verifying if your child may need his vaccines at different times.

- Consult a health professional to find out if your child needs a different vaccination schedule.

This includes babies who:

- are premature
- are born outside Canada
- are traveling in foreign countries
- have an illness that may prevent them from fighting infections and disease.





# Information

The Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development identifies and summarizes the best scientific work on the social and emotional development of young children. It disseminates this knowledge to a variety of audiences in formats and languages adapted to their needs.

For a more in-depth understanding of immunization, consult our experts' articles in the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, available free of charge at [www.child-encyclopedia.com](http://www.child-encyclopedia.com).

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