

Rotavirus (Rot) Vaccine

Immunization protects you from disease. Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger by building antibodies, which help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get this disease.

Who should have rotavirus vaccine?

This vaccine is given to babies starting at 2 months of age.

How many doses of this vaccine are needed?

Babies need 2 doses which are given by mouth. They are usually given at 2 and 4 months of age.

If your baby was immunized outside of Alberta using a different type of rotavirus vaccine, 3 doses may be needed. Check with your healthcare provider.

How well does the vaccine work?

Protection against diarrhea due to rotavirus is 74% to 87% (85% to 98% for severe diarrhea).

Where can I get the vaccine?

The vaccine is given at a public health office in your area.

Are there side effects from rotavirus vaccine?

Reactions to the vaccine are usually mild and go away in a few days. They may include:

- feeling irritable or crying
- fever
- poor appetite, vomiting, diarrhea
- cough, runny nose

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after immunization because people can have a rare but serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

Unusual reactions can happen after being immunized. Call Health Link at 811 to report any unusual reactions.

How can I manage side effects?

- If your baby gets severe stomach pain or swelling, vomiting, blood in the stool, or high fever within 7 days after rotavirus vaccine, your baby should be seen by a doctor immediately.
- If your baby needs fever medicine, check with your pharmacist or doctor. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 19 years old because it can cause serious health problems.
- Some babies with health problems (e.g., weak immune system) need to see a doctor whenever they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your baby's doctor—even if you think the fever was due to immunization.

Is there anyone who cannot have rotavirus vaccine?

Your baby may not be able to have the vaccine if he/she:

- has diarrhea or vomiting—check with the public health nurse. You may need to wait until these symptoms go away.
- has an allergy to parts of the vaccine—always tell your healthcare provider about allergies.
- had a severe or unusual reaction after this vaccine (or a similar one)—always tell your healthcare provider if your baby has had reactions.
- has or may have a weak immune system. If there is a family history of a weak immune system that is inherited, it will need to be checked before your baby can have this vaccine.
- has an inherited bowel problem (e.g., Meckel's diverticulum) that has not been repaired by surgery
- has ever had a bowel problem called intussusception (bowel block caused by one part of the bowel sliding into another, like a telescope)

Your baby can be immunized if he/she has a mild illness (e.g., cold), even with a fever.

If you or someone in your house is pregnant or has a weak immune system, your baby can be immunized. The vaccine virus may be in your baby's stool for 10 days, but spread is not common. Good handwashing is important. Make sure everyone washes their hands after handling baby's diapers and before touching food.

For More Information



Call Health Link at **811**



Go to **immunizealberta.ca**



Go to **myhealth.alberta.ca**

Disease Quick Facts: Rotavirus

What it is

- virus that causes fever and vomiting, usually followed by diarrhea
- very common—almost all unimmunized children get rotavirus infection by 5 years of age
- 1 in 14 children are admitted to hospital
- children can become very dehydrated and in rare cases, they may die

Who is most at risk

- most severe in children 3 months to 2 years of age

How it spreads

- spread by getting a tiny amount of infected stool into the mouth from hands, diapers, or surfaces (e.g., change tables, toys)
- virus can live for a long time on surfaces
- can spread before symptoms appear and for up to 3 weeks after having diarrhea
- some people do not have symptoms but can spread the disease