

## Rotavirus (Rot/Rot-5) Vaccine

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

- **Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.**
- **Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get this disease.**

What is the rotavirus vaccine?

The rotavirus vaccine protects against rotavirus infection. Unlike most vaccines, your child will get the rotavirus vaccine by mouth (instead of with a needle).

Who should have the rotavirus vaccine?

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

How many doses does my child need?

Your child needs 2 or 3 doses of this vaccine, depending which one they get. This vaccine is given by mouth at ages 2 and 4 months or at ages 2, 4, and 6 months.

Check with your public health nurse to find out if your baby needs 2 or 3 doses.

How well does the vaccine work?

The rotavirus vaccine protects your child against diarrhea from the rotavirus infection. Protection is:

- 74% to 87% for diarrhea
- 85% to 98% for severe diarrhea

Where can my child get the rotavirus vaccine?

Your child can get the vaccine at a public health office in your area.

Are there side effects from the rotavirus vaccine?

There can be side effects from the rotavirus vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- crying or getting upset easily
- fever
- not feeling hungry or not wanting to eat (poor appetite)
- vomiting or loose stool (diarrhea)
- cough or runny nose
- earache

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

There is a very low risk (1 to 7 cases per 100 000) of intussusception after the rotavirus vaccine. Intussusception is when one part of the intestine slides into another part (like a telescope). This causes a blockage in the intestine. If this happens, it is usually within 7 days after the first dose. The risk of intussusception is even lower after the second or third dose.

How can I manage side effects?

- If your child has severe stomach swelling or pain, has persistent vomiting (vomiting that will not stop or keeps coming back), has blood in their stool, or has a high fever, take them to a doctor immediately (right now).
- There is medicine to help with fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dosage to give. Follow the directions on the package.
- Children under the age of 18 years should **not** take aspirin because it can cause serious health problems.

- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your child's doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

### Who should not have rotavirus vaccine?

Your child may not be able to have the vaccine if they:

- have diarrhea or vomiting (they may need to wait to have the vaccine until these symptoms go away)
- have an allergy to parts of the vaccine
- had a severe or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it
- have or may have a weak immune system (because of medicine your child takes or a health problem)
- have a family history of a weak immune system
- have an inherited problem in their intestines that has not been fixed with surgery, such as a Meckel's diverticulum
- have ever had intussusception

Check with your child's doctor or a public health nurse before they get the vaccine.

Tell your child's healthcare provider if you took medicine while you were pregnant or breastfeeding. Some medicines can make your child's immune system weak.

Your child can still have the vaccine if they have a mild illness, such as a cold or fever.

The vaccine virus may be in your baby's stool (poop) for up to 10 days after they get the vaccine. Wash your hands carefully after you change your baby's diapers and before you touch food. The risk of spreading the virus after immunization is highest around day 7, but this is not common.

If your child lives with someone who is pregnant or has a weak immune system, they can still have the vaccine. But anyone with a weak immune system should not change your child's diapers for 10 days after they had the rotavirus vaccine (if this is possible).

Always tell your healthcare provider if your child has allergies or if they had a side effect from a vaccine in the past.

### For More Information



Call Health Link at 811



Go to [ImmunizeAlberta.ca](http://ImmunizeAlberta.ca)



Go to [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](http://MyHealth.Alberta.ca)

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## Facts about rotavirus

### What is rotavirus?

Rotavirus is a common infection that causes fever and vomiting. It is usually followed by diarrhea. Almost all children who do not get immunized will get the rotavirus infection by age 5 years.

- One in 14 children have to stay in the hospital until they get better.
- Children can get very dehydrated from vomiting and diarrhea that happens with rotavirus.
- In rare cases, children can die from being dehydrated.

### Who is most at risk?

Children age 3 months to 2 years have the highest risk of serious infection.

### How does it spread?

Rotavirus is spread through infected stool. This can happen when infected stool gets into your mouth from hands, diapers, or surfaces such as change tables or toys.

The virus can live for a long time on surfaces. It can spread before symptoms appear and up to 3 weeks after having diarrhea. Some people do not have symptoms but can still spread the disease.