

## Rotavirus Vaccine Added to Alberta Childhood Routine Immunization Program - Request to Report Intussusception

**Date:** Wednesday, May 27, 2015  
**To:** Central Zone Pediatric, Emergency and Family physicians  
**From:** Dr. Digby Horne , Medical Officer of Health – Central Zone

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**Context:** Effective June 1, 2015, live, attenuated rotavirus vaccine will be added to the Routine Immunization Program in Alberta. In an effort to decrease the burden of rotavirus illness in Alberta, public health will begin offering rotavirus vaccine to children at their 2 month and 4 month immunization appointments as of June 1, 2015.

**Background:** Rotavirus is a leading cause of acute infectious diarrhea in infants and young children, and affects approximately 95% of children by the age of 3 to 5 years. The incidence of disease is highest in children between 6 and 24 months of age, causing the majority of childhood gastroenteritis requiring hospitalization.

Rotavirus is highly infectious due to the small amount of virus needed to cause illness and the prolonged viral shedding in the stool (from a few days before up to 21 days after onset of symptoms; peak shedding is 7 to 10 days). The virus is transmitted by the fecal-oral route and through close person-to-person contact. It can also be transmitted through fomites (e.g. toys). Good hand washing, particularly after changing diapers, before food preparation and especially before direct contact with an immune compromised individual will help to decrease the spread of the virus.

**Action:** With the implementation of this new vaccine, it is important to ensure vigilance of reporting of possible adverse events following immunization. Of particular importance will be the **surveillance of intussusception following administration of rotavirus vaccine**. Zone Medical Officers of Health are requesting notification to your local public health office of any recently immunized infants (e.g. 1 mo.) who present with the following symptoms that may be consistent with intussusception:

- severe sudden stomach pain
- persistent vomiting
- blood in the stool
- swollen abdomen
- high fever

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have further questions or to report a possible adverse event following immunization, please contact your local public health office.

### For More Information on Rotavirus Vaccine (available June 1, 2015):

Physicians: Alberta Health Services Immunization Program Standards Manual.  
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/10802.asp>

Parents: ImmunizeAlberta [www.immunizealberta.ca](http://www.immunizealberta.ca)

Dr. Digby Horne  
on behalf of Medical Officers of Health  
Central Zone

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