Immunisation – DTP, polio, hep B and Hib
Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) are six infectious diseases that are particularly dangerous to babies. Combined vaccinations enable maximum protection to begin as soon as possible after birth. In Victoria, a number of vaccine combinations for children are provided for free under the National Immunisation Program. Serious reactions to the combined vaccines are rare.

A number of combined immunisations against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and other infectious diseases are available to provide protection at various life stages. Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis) or DTP, polio, hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) are six infectious diseases that are particularly dangerous to babies. Combined immunisations enable maximum protection to begin as soon as possible after birth.

Combined immunisations minimise the number of injections required, especially for babies and children. Although some types of immunisation are effective after only one dose, others, such as diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough, require a primary course and lifelong booster doses.

In Victoria, a number of vaccine combinations for children are free under the National Immunisation Program.

**Six-in-one vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, hepatitis B and Hib**

In Victoria, the six-in-one vaccine is free of charge for:

- children at two months (from six weeks), four months and six months of age – a primary course of immunisations against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, hepatitis B and Hib
- children up to and including nine years of age who have not been immunised and require catch-up immunisations.

The three doses of the six-in-one vaccine provide:

- the first three doses of the vaccines against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio
- the second, third and fourth doses of the hepatitis B vaccine (the first dose is given at birth against hepatitis B alone).

The final booster dose of Hib vaccine is given in combination with the single required dose of meningococcal C vaccine at 12 months of age.

**Four-in-one vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio**

In Victoria, the four-in-one vaccine is free of charge for:

- children at four years of age – booster dose of vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio
- children from four years and one month up to and including nine years of age who have not been immunised and require a catch-up booster dose.

The four-in-one vaccine provides the final dose of polio vaccine.

**Three-in-one vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough**

In Victoria, the three-in-one vaccine is free for children at 18 months of age as a booster dose of diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough.

**Three-in-one vaccine (reduced antigen) against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough**

In Victoria, the three-in-one vaccine (reduced antigen), also known as the three-in-one dTpa vaccine, is free for:

- young people at 12 to 13 years of age
- pregnant women from 28 weeks gestation during every pregnancy
- partners of women who are at least 28 weeks pregnant if the partner has not received a pertussis booster in the last ten years
- parents or guardians of babies born on or after 1 June 2015, if their baby is under six months of age and they have not received a pertussis booster in the last ten years
- children who are 10 to 19 years of age, for catch-up immunisation as part of the primary course
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, refugees and asylum seekers, and vulnerable citizens who are 10 years of age and over.

In Australia, immunity to diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough begins to decrease in people over the age of 50 years and they are recommended a booster dose of the combination vaccine to provide protection. A prescription is required from your doctor for this vaccine.

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Pregnancy and three-in-one dTpa vaccine

The three-in-one dTpa (reduced antigen) vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough is recommended to be given to women between 28 and 32 weeks gestation in every pregnancy, regardless of the interval between pregnancies, to protect both the mother and the newborn baby from whooping cough.

If the dose has not been given in the third trimester, then it is recommended to be given as soon as possible after delivery. The three-in-one vaccine is also recommended for women who are pregnant, and who have a wound that might result in tetanus. This vaccine can be given to women who are breastfeeding.

Speak with your doctor about your immunisation options.

Side effects of the vaccines against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and other infectious diseases

Immunisations containing vaccines against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and other infectious diseases (including the six-in-one, four-in-one and three-in-one vaccines) are effective and safe although all medications can have unwanted side effects.

Side effects from these combined vaccines are uncommon and usually mild, but may include:

- localised pain, redness and swelling at the injection site
- occasionally, an injection-site lump (nodule) that may last many weeks but treatment is not needed
- low-grade temperature (fever)
- children can be unsettled, irritable, tearful, generally unhappy, drowsy and tired.

If a combined immunisation also contains the vaccine against polio (the six-in-one and the four-in-one vaccine), muscle aches may also be experienced.

Extremely rare side effects include

- brachial neuritis in adolescents and adults (severe pain, shoulder and upper arm)
- severe allergic reaction.

Managing fever after immunisation

Common side effects following immunisation are usually mild and temporary (occurring in the first one to two days after vaccination). Specific treatment is not usually required.

There are a number of treatment options that can reduce the side effects of the vaccine including:

- Give extra fluids to drink.
- Do not overdress children or babies if they are hot.
- Although routine use of paracetamol after vaccination is not recommended, if fever is present, paracetamol can be given. Check the label for the correct dose or speak with your pharmacist, especially when giving paracetamol to children.

Managing injection site reactions

Many vaccine injections may result in soreness, redness, itching or swelling at the injection site for one to two days. Booster doses of DTPa-containing vaccines, routinely given at 18 months and four years of age, are occasionally associated with extensive swelling of the vaccinated limb which completely resolves within a few days.

Paracetamol or a cool compress on the injection site might be required to ease the discomfort.

Sometimes, a small, hard lump (nodule) at the injection site may persist for some weeks or months. This should not be of concern and requires no treatment.

Concerns about immunisation side effects

If an adverse event following immunisation is unexpected, persistent or severe, or if you are worried about yourself or your child's condition after immunisation, see your doctor or immunisation nurse as soon as possible, or go directly to a hospital.

It is also important to seek medical advice if you (or your child) are unwell, as this may be due to other illness rather than because of the immunisation.

Adverse events that occur following immunisation may be reported to the Victorian Surveillance of Adverse Events Following Vaccination in the Community (SAEFVIC) Line. SAEFVIC is the central reporting service in Victoria for any significant adverse events following immunisations. You can discuss with your immunisation provider how to report adverse events in other states or territories.

Rare immunisation side effects

There is a very small risk of a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to any vaccine. This is why you are advised to stay at the clinic or medical surgery for at least 15 minutes following immunisation in case further treatment is required.

If any other reactions are severe and persistent, or if you are worried, contact your doctor for further information.

Immunisation and HALO

The immunisations you may need are decided by your health, age, lifestyle and occupation. Together, these factors are referred to as HALO.

Talk to your doctor or immunisation provider if you think you or someone in your care has health, age, lifestyle or occupation factors that could mean immunisation is betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Where to get help

- In an emergency, always call triple zero (000)
- Emergency department of your nearest hospital
- Your doctor
- Local government immunisation service
- Maternal and Child Health Line (24 hours, 7 days) Tel. 13 22 29
- NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)
- Immunisation Section, Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Government Tel. 1300 882 008
- Immunise Australia Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811
- SAEFVIC Tel. 1300 882 924 – the line is attended between 9 am and 4 pm and you can leave a message at all other times
- Pharmacist

References

- Epiglottitis (Haemophilus influenzae type B), 2017, Raising Children Network.
- Immunisation schedule Victoria and vaccine eligibility criteria, 2017, Department of Health & Human Services, Victorian Government.
- Vaccine side effects, 2017, Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Government.
- Pre-immunisation checklist – what to tell your doctor or nurse before immunisation, 2017, Department of Health & Human Services, Victorian Government.
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More information

Immunisation

The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as Active Tab

- Immunisation basics
- Timing and schedules
- Immunisation throughout life
- Common concerns about immunisation
- Travel and immunisation
- A-Z of immunisations and vaccines

Immunisation basics

- Why immunisation is important
  Immunisation saves lives. It protects you, your family and your community. And it also helps protect future generations by eradicating diseases...
- Immunisation – deciding which vaccines you need
  Everyone's immunisation needs are different and are influence by your health, lifestyle, age and occupation...
- Pre-immunisation checklist
  This immunisation checklist will help you prepare so you know what to expect and what information you will need to give your GP or clinic staff before your immunisation...
- Dr Margaret's Story (video)
  Access to vaccines has changed lives and protects our children from crippling diseases such as polio...
- Immune system explained
  The immune system remembers every germ it has ever overcome...
- Immunisation – common questions
  We answer some common questions about immunisation, including how immunisation works, why it's important and where you can be immunised...
- Immunisations - vaccinations in Victoria, Australia (video)
  Vaccinations are encouraged for all individuals living in the state of Victoria, Australia. The immunisation program in Victoria may be different than other countries, and individuals who have moved...
- Infections – bacterial and viral
  Many bacterial infections can be treated with antibiotics, but they are useless against viral infections...
- No Jab No Play

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age.

- Roc Story (video)
  Talk to a qualified medical expert like your doctor to find out more about immunisation.

- Vaccines
  Vaccines trick the body into building immunity against infectious diseases without causing the actual disease.

Timing and schedules

- Childhood immunisation
  Being immunised from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections.

- Immunisation in secondary schools
  Some immunisations are recommended for all Australian teenagers.

- Immunisation history statements for children
  By law, parents or guardians must provide an Immunisation History Statement when enrolling children in any childcare service, kindergarten or primary school in Victoria.

- No Jab No Play
  No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age.

- 10 tips for secondary students on how to deal with immunisation
  10 tips for secondary students on how to deal with immunisation.

- How to find your vaccination records
  If you’ve recently arrived in Australia or missed out on an immunisation for any reason, you may need catch-up doses.

- Immunisation – common questions
  We answer some common questions about immunisation, including how immunisation works, why it's important and where you can be immunised.

- Immunisations – catch-ups and boosters
  If you’ve recently arrived in Australia or missed out on an immunisation for any reason, you may need catch-up doses.

- Immunisations for older people
  Immunisations are important for you as you get older, because your immune system can become less effective at protecting you from some diseases.

- My Health, Learning and Development book
  My Health and Development Record is designed for parents to keep and record their child's milestones, health, growth, development and immunisations.

- Pre-immunisation checklist
  This immunisation checklist will help you prepare so you know what to expect and what information you will need to give your GP or clinic staff before your immunisation.

- Recent arrivals, asylum seekers and family support services
  Provides an overview of family support programs and health services available to refugees and asylum seekers living in Victoria.

- Who provides immunisations in Victoria
  Immunisations in Victoria are provided by local councils, GPs and specially qualified nurses in medical clinics and community health services, some Maternal and Child Health nurses, travel clinics and...

Immunisation throughout life

- 10 tips for secondary students on how to deal with immunisation
  10 tips for secondary students on how to deal with immunisation.

- Childhood immunisation
  Being immunised from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections.

- Flu (influenza) – immunisation
Influenza immunisation is recommended for people in known high risk groups.

- How to find your vaccination records
  If you've recently arrived in Australia or missed out on an immunisation for any reason, you may need catch-up doses.

- Immunisation and pregnancy
  Immunisation can protect a woman and her unborn baby against many infectious diseases.

- Immunisation – common questions
  We answer some common questions about immunisation, including how immunisation works, why it's important and where you can be immunised.

- Immunisation – deciding which vaccines you need
  Everyone's immunisation needs are different and are influenced by your health, lifestyle, age and occupation.

- Immunisation – DTP, polio, hep B and Hib
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- Immunisations for work
  Some jobs have a higher risk of exposure to infectious diseases, so if your job is one of these, it’s a good idea to check your immunisation status.

- Melissa's story (video)
  Melissa shares her story of how her baby caught chickenpox at 5 weeks old.

- No Jab No Play
  No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age.

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Common concerns about immunisation

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- Pre-immunisation checklist
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- Immunisation – side effects
  Find out more about possible side effects of immunisation.

- Immunisations for older people
  Immunisations are important for you as you get older, because your immune system can become less effective at protecting you from some diseases.

- Immunisation – common questions
  We answer some common questions about immunisation, including how immunisation works, why it's important and where you can be immunised.
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**Travel and immunisation**

- **Diphtheria**
  Diphtheria is a serious bacterial disease that causes severe inflammation of the nose, throat and windpipe.

- **Flu (influenza) – immunisation**
  Influenza immunisation is recommended for people in known high-risk groups.

- **Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) immunisation**
  The National Immunisation Program provides children with free immunisation against Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and meningococcal group C disease.

- **Hepatitis A**
  Immunisation is the best protection against hepatitis A infection and it is recommended for people in high-risk groups.

- **Hepatitis B – immunisation**
  Immunisation against hepatitis B reduces the risk of infection in babies.

- **Human papillomavirus (HPV) – immunisation**
  The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine helps prevent infection with HPV that causes cervical cancer.

- **Immunisation – deciding which vaccines you need**
  Everyone's immunisation needs are different and are influence by your health, lifestyle, age and occupation.

- **Immunisation – DTP, polio, hep B and Hib**
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- **Infections – bacterial and viral**
  Many bacterial infections can be treated with antibiotics, but they are useless against viral infections.

- **Measles**
  Measles can cause serious and sometimes fatal complications, including pneumonia and brain inflammation.

**A-Z of immunisations and vaccines**

- **Pre-immunisation checklist**
  This immunisation checklist will help you prepare so you know what to expect and what information you will need to give your GP or clinic staff before your immunisation.

- **Australian bat lyssavirus (ABLV)**
  The simplest form of prevention for lyssavirus is to avoid close contact with bats.

- **Caitlin and Liam's story (video)**
  Find out how important you and your child's immunisation is to the most vulnerable members in our community.

- **Diphtheria**
  Diphtheria is a serious bacterial disease that causes severe inflammation of the nose, throat and windpipe.

- **Dr Margaret's Story (video)**
  Access to vaccines has changed lives and protects our children from crippling diseases such as polio.

- **Dr Margie Danchin (video)**
  Can a child's immune system be overloaded by immunisations? The answer is no. Talk to a qualified medical expert like your doctor to find out more about immunisation.

- **Flu (influenza) – immunisation**
  Influenza immunisation is recommended for people in known high-risk groups.

- **Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)**
  Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) is a bacterium that causes a life-threatening infection that can lead to serious illness, especially in children.

- **Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) immunisation**

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- **Immunisation history statements for children**
  By law, parents or guardians must provide an Immunisation History Statement when enrolling children in any childcare service, kindergarten or primary school in Victoria.

- **Leptospirosis**
  Leptospirosis is a disease spread from animals to humans, caused by infection with the bacteria Leptospira.

- **Measles**
  Measles can cause serious and sometimes fatal complications, including pneumonia and brain inflammation.

- **Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (chickenpox)** – immunisation
  Immunisation is the best protection against measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chickenpox).

- **Melissa's story (video)**
  Melissa shares her story of how her baby caught chickenpox at 5 weeks old.

- **Meningococcal disease** – immunisation
  Meningococcal group vaccines provide good protection against meningococcal group diseases.

- **Mumps**
  Mumps is a viral illness that causes fever and swollen salivary glands, and a swollen face.

- **Pneumococcal disease** – immunisation
  Immunisation can substantially reduce the risk of pneumococcal disease, especially in young children.

- **Polio** – immunisation
  You need several doses of the vaccine before you are fully protected against polio.

- **Ros' Story (video)**
  Talk to a qualified medical expert like your doctor to find out more about immunisation.

- **Rotavirus**
  Rotavirus is a common cause of viral gastroenteritis for Australian babies and preschool children.

- **Rotavirus – immunisation**
  Children need several doses of the vaccine to reduce the risk of rotavirus.

- **Smallpox**
  Smallpox was once a feared and highly contagious viral disease.

- **Tetanus**
  Tetanus is a life-threatening disease and immunisation is the best way to reduce your risk.

- **Time to immunise - free vaccines for men who have sex with men**
  Immunisation is one of the best ways you can protect yourself and others from infectious diseases in our community. In partnership with Thorne Harbour Health (formerly Victorian AIDS Council), the...

- **Travel health - yellow fever immunisation**
  If you are travelling or passing through areas infected with yellow fever, some countries require you to be vaccinated.

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• **Tuberculosis (TB)**
  
  Tuberculosis is spread when a person with an active infection coughs, laughs, sings or sneezes...

• **Typhoid and paratyphoid**
  
  Almost every Australian case of typhoid or paratyphoid fever is caught overseas...

• **Whooping cough**
  
  The major symptom of whooping cough is a severe cough, which is often followed by a ‘whooping’ sound...

• **Whooping cough – a family’s experience (video)**
  
  A family shares their experience when their baby daughter contracted whooping cough (or pertussis)...

• **Why immunisation is important**
  
  Immunisation saves lives. It protects you, your family and your community. And it also helps protect future generations by eradicating diseases...

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**Related Information**

• **Flu (influenza) – immunisation**
  
  Influenza immunisation is recommended for people in known high risk groups...

• **Rotavirus – immunisation**
  
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• Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Government – Check your immunisation HALO
• Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Government – Free vaccine Victoria: criteria for eligibility
• Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Government – Immunisation
• Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Government – Infection Diseases. In your language
• Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Government – SAFFVIC Adverse events reporting
• Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Government – Whooping cough vaccine
• Department of Health, Australian Government – Immunise Australia Program
• Department of Health, Victorian Government – Infectious Diseases.

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This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by: Department of Health and Human Services - RHP&R - Health Protection - Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit

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**What vaccines you need**

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Multilingual resources on childhood immunisations

- A reminder for parents about immunisation
- Catch up vaccinations for refugees and asylum seekers in Victoria
- Childhood pneumococcal disease
- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough) booster vaccine for 18 month old children
- Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis B, polio and Hib vaccine for infants
- Immunisations - vaccinations in Victoria
- Measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox immunisation information