



National Institute for Public Health  
and the Environment  
*Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport*

# *Protect your child against infectious diseases*

National Immunisation Programme



## Protect your child against serious infectious diseases

Nearly all children in the Netherlands are vaccinated against serious infectious diseases, so these diseases almost never occur here anymore. Still, it is important to vaccinate, since the diseases will come back if we stop vaccinating. Vaccinations will protect your child from catching diseases and developing complications, and will prevent that your child infects others.

That is also very important for children who have not been vaccinated (yet), for example because they are too young, or cannot be vaccinated due to illness.

## A healthy start in life

We consider it important for children to have a healthy start in life. That is why countries worldwide offer vaccinations to children. Each country



has its own vaccination schedule. These schedules are very similar.

In the Netherlands, children have been vaccinated for over 60 years.

## Diphtheria

Diphtheria is a serious throat infection. Children who have diphtheria run the risk of suffocating.

## Whooping cough

Whooping cough (pertussis) causes violent coughing fits that can persist for months. This is especially dangerous for babies. Whooping cough in infancy can lead to exhaustion and brain damage, or even death. Vaccination against whooping cough is effective in reducing the risk, but it does not completely eliminate the possibility of infection, and does not provide lifelong protection. Vaccinated children who do catch whooping cough will be less seriously ill.

## Tetanus

Tetanus leads to violent muscle spasms. Without treatment, tetanus is fatal. Tetanus is not contagious. That means that it cannot spread from person to person. A child can get tetanus after a bite from a pet or other animal, or if dirt from the street gets into an open wound.

## Polio

Polio can cause permanent paralysis of the legs, arms and/or respiratory muscles.

## Hib disease

The Hib bacterium causes serious infections such as blood poisoning (septicaemia), meningitis, epiglottitis, pneumonia or inflammatory arthritis.

## Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is an inflammation of the liver. If the disease becomes chronic, it can cause atrophy of the liver and liver cancer.

## Pneumococcal disease

Pneumococci are bacteria which can cause blood poisoning (septicaemia), serious pneumonia and meningitis. Children can also suffer from hearing loss as a result of the infection. The vaccine is effective against the most common types of pathogenic pneumococci.

## Mumps

Mumps is an infection that primarily affects the salivary glands. That is why children with the mumps develop swelling in their cheeks and neck. It sometimes leads to meningitis.

## Measles

Measles is a disease involving high fever and an itchy, painful rash. It is often accompanied by ear infection, and sometimes leads to pneumonia or encephalitis that can lead to death. Measles is highly contagious.

## Rubella

Rubella causes a rash, but the resulting illness is much less serious than measles. During pregnancy, however, rubella poses a danger to the unborn baby. A baby exposed to rubella before birth can be born with serious defects. To prevent pregnant women from getting infected, boys and girls are vaccinated against rubella.

## Meningococcal disease

Meningococcal disease is caused by various types of meningococcal bacteria. Children with meningococcal disease can develop meningitis or blood poisoning (septicaemia). These are very serious illnesses, which rapidly become life-threatening. Even if children recover, they can have lifelong problems with hearing loss, learning disabilities and behavioural problems. If they develop septicaemia, an arm or leg may sometimes have to be amputated. Vaccination in the National Immunisation Programme protects against types A, C, W and Y, not against type B.

## HPV

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a group of viruses which can cause cervical cancer and other types of cancer (including cancer of the penis or anus). Almost everyone will be infected by one of these viruses at some point in their lives, without even noticing it. The vaccine protects against two types of HPV-viruses. Together, these viruses cause approximately 70% of the cases of cervical cancer.



**“Take care of  
your child and  
of each other”**

### **Trilce (41) sees vaccination as a healthy and logical choice**

Even before her daughter Isabella was born, Trilce already had clear ideas about how she would raise her. Health played an important role in her plans. Trilce often discusses the topic at home, with her husband or her friends. They talk about healthy foods and about naps, but also about vaccinations. That should just be part of the discussion, she believes. Vaccinations are important to keep her daughter safe and protected – and other children too.

*Read the story of Trilce and her daughter Isabella at [rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/trilce](https://rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/trilce)*

## **Safe and reliable**

Before a vaccine is approved for use, it is tested extensively, just like any other medicine. Vaccines are not allowed to be given to children until it is absolutely clear that the vaccine works and is safe. Vaccine safety is also closely monitored while they are used – not just in the Netherlands, but all across the world.

## **Vaccine and information leaflet**

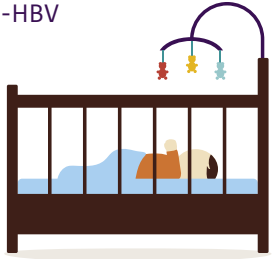
Do you want to know about the composition of the vaccines that your child will receive? The information leaflets for the vaccines used in the National Immunisation Programme are available on the website at [rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/bijsluiters](https://rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/bijsluiters).

# Which vaccines will my child receive?

● Vaccination 1 ■ Vaccination 2

## 3 months

- DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV
- PCV



## 5 months

- DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV
- PCV



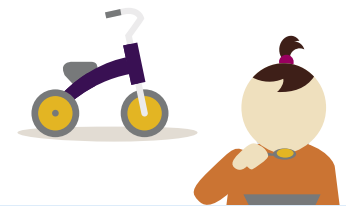
## 11 months

- DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV
- PCV



## 14 months

- MMR
- MenACWY



## 4 years

- DTaP-IPV



## 9 years

- DT-IPV
- MMR



## 12/13 years\* (Vaccination 2: half a year later)

- HPV
- HPV



## 14 years

- MenACWY



### Extra DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV vaccination at the age of 2 months

A child receives an extra vaccination at the age of 2 months if the mother was not vaccinated against whooping cough (pertussis) during pregnancy, and in case of special circumstances. The doctor or nurse at your well baby clinic will discuss this with you.

### Abbreviations and what they mean

D Diphtheria  
 T Tetanus  
 aP Pertussis (whooping cough)  
 IPV Poliomyelitis

Hib Haemophilus influenzae type b  
 HBV Hepatitis B  
 PCV Pneumococcal disease  
 M Mumps

M Measles  
 R Rubella  
 MenACWY Meningococcal ACWY  
 HPV Human papillomavirus

\* Only for girls



## When will my child receive the vaccinations?

Infants receive their first vaccinations when they are about 3 months old. Their immune system is already capable of a vigorous response at that age. The timing of the vaccinations has been designed to offer the best protection. Very young babies are extremely vulnerable to infectious diseases such as whooping cough. That is also why pregnant women in the Netherlands are offered a vaccination against whooping cough when they are 22 weeks pregnant. Vaccinating during pregnancy ensures that the baby will be protected against whooping cough from birth. Children usually receive two injections per visit. The vaccinations are administered in the thigh or upper arm.

## My child is ill. Can he or she be vaccinated as scheduled?

If your child is ill or on medication, please consult the physician or nurse at the Well-Baby Clinic. Sometimes it is advisable to postpone the vaccination for a little while.

## Tips in case of side effects

Vaccinations can have side-effects, because they activate the body's immune response. These side-effects are generally mild and will disappear spontaneously. The most common side-effect is a mild fever shortly after the vaccination. In addition, the injection site may be a bit red or swollen. A few tips to soothe the pain:

- In case of fever, make sure that your child drinks enough fluids
- Very young infants may be comforted by cuddles and distractions
- If a child is in pain or seems to be feeling unwell, paracetamol might help. Check the information leaflet for the right dose
- Avoid touching the arm or leg where the vaccination was administered if possible. This can make the pain worse

Serious side effects are very rare. If you are concerned because your child is very sick, or if your child is still listless or feverish after a few days, you can contact your family doctor.

## Vaccinations outside the National Immunisation Programme

There are also vaccines available that are not included in the National Immunisation Programme. You or your child can also receive these vaccinations. However, since they are not part of the programme, you will have to pay for them yourself. If you would like to arrange these vaccinations, you can contact your family doctor or a vaccination centre. You cannot get these vaccines at the Well-Baby Clinic.

Go to [rivm.nl/vaccinaties](https://rivm.nl/vaccinaties) to read more about the vaccines available in the Netherlands. Children with an increased risk of tuberculosis will be offered a vaccination against tuberculosis. If your child is eligible for this vaccination, you will be sent a notice by the tuberculosis prevention department of your local Municipal Public Health Services (GGD). Contact the GGD if you have any questions about this. The costs of the tuberculosis vaccination are covered by health insurance.

Are you planning a trip abroad with your child? Check with the travel clinic or GGD vaccination office if any additional vaccinations are necessary.

## Reporting a side-effect

You can report a side-effect of a vaccination to the doctor or nurse who administered the vaccination. They will then pass on the report of the side-effect to the Lareb Pharmacovigilance Centre. You can also report the side-effect to Lareb yourself. Side-effects can also be reported via the website at [rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/english](https://rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/english).

## Talking to youth healthcare services

The National Immunisation Programme website provides more information about various infectious diseases, vaccinations and side-effects. Unfortunately, people also find lots of incorrect information online. If you have questions about vaccinations and diseases, you can always contact the physician or nurse at your Well-Baby Clinic, the local Centre for Youth and Families, or the Municipal Public Health Services (GGD) in your region.



## Information about the vaccination

RIVM, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, gives parents information about the vaccinations. Starting with the invitation that pregnant women receive for the 22-week vaccination. Shortly after the birth of their child, parents receive a set of vaccination cards for all inoculations until the child is 14 months old. When a child is 4 years old, and again at 9 years old, the parents receive a new invitation for the next vaccination. In the year that girls turn 13 years old, they will also receive an invitation for the vaccinations to prevent cervical cancer. When boys and girls are 14 years old, they receive an invitation for the vaccination to prevent meningococcal disease.

The vaccinations are recorded in three places: in the records maintained by the youth healthcare services, on the child's vaccination certificate, and in the national records maintained by RIVM.

RIVM uses this information for ongoing quality assessment of the immunisation programme as well as the vaccines, to send reminders, to provide copies of the vaccination certificates, and to assess the percentage of vaccinated children in the Netherlands. If there is an outbreak of an infectious disease, it is very important to know which children are protected, to check if there is a chance that the disease will spread and whether special government intervention is needed.



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PO Box 1 | 3720 BA Bilthoven | The Netherlands  
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