



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

# *Protect your child with vaccinations*

## National Immunisation Programme



## Protect your child with vaccinations

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. Before vaccinations were introduced, diphtheria was a major cause of death in children.

### 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. In boys, mumps can cause infertility.

## 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 that can cause various types of cancer in men and women, such as in the mouth, throat, penis, anus or cervix. Eight in ten people will have an HPV infection one or more times over the course of their lives. When children turn ten, they receive an invitation for the HPV vaccination. The best protection is by vaccinating children before they contract the virus.



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

### Trilce (33) 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](http://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. Information about side-effects is provided on page 8.

## 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](http://rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/bijsluiters).

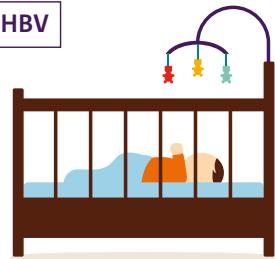
# Which vaccines will my child receive?

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



## 10 years (vaccination 2: half 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



## 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. Children usually receive two injections per visit. The vaccinations are administered in the thigh or upper arm. Very young babies are extremely vulnerable to 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.

## 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.

## 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 (temperature around 38 degrees) 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.

## 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](http://rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/english).

## 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](http://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.



## 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, coordinates the National Immunisation Programme in the Netherlands. RIVM informs parents about the vaccinations provided in the National Immunisation Programme and sends the immunisation invitations. Local youth healthcare services carry out the National Immunisation Programme and give the vaccinations.

When your child has received a vaccination, youth healthcare services record the details of the vaccinations in the reporting system and on your child's vaccination certificate. If you agree, youth healthcare services will share the data with RIVM. The data that is shared are vaccination details and your child's personal details. The doctor or nurse from the youth healthcare services asks your permission to share data between the youth healthcare services and RIVM.

This permission is important. RIVM can only properly perform various tasks if it knows exactly which vaccinations your child has received. For example, RIVM uses the data to send you a reminder for your child's vaccinations at the right time. In addition, RIVM can give you a copy of your child's vaccination certificate if you request it.

RIVM also uses the information for ongoing quality assessment of the National Immunisation Programme and for vaccine monitoring. Finally, RIVM uses the data to calculate how many children in the Netherlands have received all their immunisations. If there is an outbreak of an infectious disease, it is very important to know how many people are already protected. Then RIVM can assess whether the disease will be able to spread and whether measures are necessary.

For more information, see [rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/jouw-toestemming](http://rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/jouw-toestemming).

Published by:

**National Institute for Public Health  
and the Environment, RIVM**  
P.O. Box 1 | 3720 BA Bilthoven  
The Netherlands  
[www.rivm.nl/en](http://www.rivm.nl/en)

January 2022

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