



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

Protect your baby against whooping cough

*Get your 22-week
vaccination*

National Immunisation Programme



Whooping cough is dangerous for babies. You can protect your baby from whooping cough by getting vaccinated yourself during your pregnancy. The vaccine is available starting from the 22nd week of your pregnancy. Since the vaccine is included in the National Immunisation Programme, the shot is free. You can read more about it in this leaflet but if you would like more information, please visit the website: rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/22wekenprik.

What is Whooping Cough?

Whooping cough is also known as pertussis or the '100-day cough'. It is caused by a bacterial infection and is extremely contagious. The infection can lead to severe coughing fits which can persist for months. Infants may struggle to breathe well and could even stop breathing for a several seconds.

Dangerous for babies

Whooping cough can be extremely dangerous for babies. They may get pneumonia or develop brain damage, and could even die from the disease. In the Netherlands nearly 170 infants end up in hospital with whooping cough every year.

In Bonaire there were 6 confirmed cases in 2017: half of them were unvaccinated children under the age of two years. So even here children are at risk of catching whooping cough.

Newborns are unprotected

Infants and young children can be vaccinated against whooping cough, however, they cannot get their first vaccinations until they are a few months old. That means that newborns are not yet protected against whooping cough during the first few months of their life. And this is when they are most vulnerable to catching it.

How can you protect your baby?

You can get vaccinated against whooping cough yourself during your pregnancy. That ensures that your baby will be protected from the moment they enter the world. You can get the shot from the 22nd week of your pregnancy. That is why it is known as the 22-week vaccination. The vaccination will be administered to you in your upper arm.

How does it work?

After you have had the vaccination, your body makes antibodies. These antibodies are shared with your unborn baby via the placenta. As a result, your baby will have enough antibodies to protect against whooping cough for the first few months of their life, until your baby gets his or her first vaccination. The vaccine protects you, your baby, and others around you as you won't catch whooping cough and spread it to others.



One less shot

Another benefit of getting vaccinated during pregnancy is that your baby might not need to be vaccinated as often. In that case, your baby will get the first vaccination at 3 months instead of 2 months.*

* *Not in all cases. The doctor or nurse specialist at the Well-Baby Clinic will discuss this with you. See also the website at rijkvaccinatieprogramma.nl/22wekenprik*

Breastfeeding

Natural antibodies are also provided in breast milk, but these antibodies do not protect babies against whooping cough. Even if you are planning to

breastfeed later, you still need to be vaccinated to make sure that your infant will be well protected.

Combined vaccine

The vaccine you will receive is the DPT shot. It not only protects you against whooping cough (pertussis), but also against two other diseases: tetanus and diphtheria. An individual vaccine against whooping cough is not available.

Tetanus

In Bonaire, veterinarians sometimes detect tetanus as a cause of death in unvaccinated animals like donkeys. This means tetanus exists in the soil here. Tetanus leads to violent muscle spasms and without treatment,





tetanus is fatal. Tetanus is not contagious. That means that it cannot spread from person to person. Nevertheless a child can get tetanus after being bitten by an animal, or when dirt from the street gets into an open wound.

Diphtheria

Diphtheria reappeared in a few countries in South America in 2016. It is a serious throat infection. Children who contract diphtheria run the risk of suffocating, as it can damage their lung tissue. Before vaccines were available many children died from diphtheria.

If you get vaccinated after the 22nd week of pregnancy, your newborn will be protected against tetanus and diphtheria immediately after it's born.

Is it safe?

Extensive research has been done to ensure that the vaccination is safe for you and your baby. In England, Belgium, Spain, and the USA women have been having the vaccination for several years. In the Netherlands this vaccination takes place regularly and has done so since 2019. In 2020 about 70% of the pregnant women have chosen to take the “22wekenprik”.

Side-effects

You may experience some side-effects such as listlessness, headache or a slightly swollen or sore arm after the vaccination. These side-effects are usually fairly mild and will resolve on their own. Serious side-effects are very rare.

Where?

To get a vaccination, please make an appointment with the Well-Baby Clinic, preferably through WhatsApp. There are certain moments available for pregnant woman to get the vaccination.

Address Sentro Aksesio:

Afdeling Jeugdgezondheidszorg (JGZ)
Departamentu Salu Hubenil
Kaya Princes Marie 7
Bonaire CN
Tel: (+599) 717-7300
WhatsApp: (+599) 701-5256



While you are there, you will hear more about the vaccinations that your baby will be offered later via the National Immunisation Programme. Some personal information will be registered and there is a questionnaire to be answered before we can vaccinate you, for your own and your baby's benefit.

Please take your ID with you and if you have a vaccination passport, you're welcome to bring it.

When?

You can get the shot from the 22nd week of your pregnancy until your baby is born. Sooner rather than later. We recommend that you repeat the 22-week vaccination each time you are pregnant.

Free

The 22-week vaccination is part of the National Immunisation Programme, so it is free.



Published by

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and the Environment**

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