

# Immunizations and Vaccinations

## Welcome to Toronto Package

### What are Vaccines?

Vaccinations protect you from specific diseases that can make you very sick. They boost your body's own defense system, called the immune system. Sometimes vaccines are called immunizations, vaccinations needles or shots.

### Do Vaccines Cost Money?

Certain immunizations are publicly funded, meaning the cost is covered by the government. Some vaccines are not required for everyone and are only required or recommended for special populations who have a high risk. When this happens, the cost may not be covered for the general population. To get a vaccine or learn which ones you need, talk with your family doctor or local clinic.

### Who Decides Which Vaccines are Needed?

In Canada, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends vaccines based on their safety, effectiveness and benefits. Ontario creates vaccine programs based on local information such as:

- Who is getting the disease
- At what age are they getting the disease
- How common is the disease
- What is the severity of the illness

These factors can change depending on the location, so each province creates their own immunization schedule.

Adapted from the Government of Canada website: <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca>

### Vaccines for Children and Youth

Children and youth attending primary or secondary school in Ontario must have proof of immunization against the following diseases:

- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Polio
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Meningococcal Disease
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Varicella (chickenpox) - for children born in 2010 or later

Children may be suspended from school if they are not up to date on these mandatory vaccinations.

Vaccines work best when given at specific ages and for maximum protection often involve multiple doses. It's important that you and your children are up to date on your vaccinations according to where you live. Talk to your family doctor about catching up on vaccines. An Ontario schedule of vaccinations from infancy to adulthood and an alternate catch up schedule can be found online at this link:

<http://health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/immunization/docs/schedule.pdf>

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Toronto Public Health offers free vaccine clinics to students grade 7 to 12 who are not up to date on their immunizations or do not have OHIP coverage. Appointments can be made online at <https://www.tphbookings.ca>.

### Immunization Records

In Ontario, the immunization record is a folded yellow piece of paper. Your immunization record or "yellow card" lists all vaccinations you have received in Canada.

A **complete** and **up-to-date** immunization record is an important document. In addition to registering your child for school or daycare, you might also need it when your child needs emergency treatment or when you register your child for summer camp or other children's programs.

### Influenza (the Flu)

The Flu shot is the most effective way to prevent influenza (the flu). Each year, there is a new vaccine so you need a flu shot every year.

Each year in Canada, about 12,200 people are hospitalized and 3,500 die due to the flu and its complications (Toronto Public Health, 2014).

Getting the flu shot can help protect yourself, your loved ones and your community.

### Who should get the Flu Shot?



Everyone who is 6 months of age or older should get the flu shot unless there are certain medical reasons that prevent them from getting it (ask your health care provider).

Flu season is usually in the late fall to early spring. During this time, many places offer free flu shots (e.g. health centres, pharmacies, your doctor).

Sherbourne Health Centre and the St James Town Community Corner offers free flu clinics during flu season. Look for flyers and postings in the Fall season, or call 416-324-4100 for more information.