

There are additional benefits for you as a parent such as saving time with fewer appointments, less travel and fewer hours of work missed.

How can I prepare my child for getting a vaccine shot?

You can prepare by talking to your child about the clinic appointment positively and honestly.

- Talk to your child about the vaccine shot and focus on why it is needed.
- Explain how these serious diseases are avoided when we get immunized.
- Tell your child about how serious these diseases are if we get sick.
- Be honest if your child asks if the shot hurts. Let your child know that the shot can hurt sometimes, but the hurt does not last long.

Can the pain and stress from the vaccine shot be reduced?

The pain from getting the vaccine shot is mild and does not last long. There are ways to reduce the pain and stress from the shot. These include:

- Swaddling, holding, giving your child a pacifier, or breastfeeding infants help to reduce stress of the shot.

- Giving something sweet such as oral sucrose or glucose at the time of the shot can reduce the pain among infants up to 12 months of age.
- Distraction activities such as reading a book or watching a video together on the subject may reduce stress of the shot.
- Activities such as blowing soap bubbles, blowing windmills to “blow away the hurt” can be helpful.

There are many more ways that the pain and stress can be reduced. Talk to your health care provider giving the shot for more strategies.

For more information talk to your health care provider, call your local public health unit, or call:

1-866-532-3161

TTY 1-800-387-5559

ontario.ca/vaccines

The goal is to protect your child as quickly as possible from diseases that are very dangerous to young children. More than ever before, children are protected from devastating diseases, thanks to vaccines.

Recommended Resources

To learn more about immunization, please visit your local bookstore or library for the following books:

- **Your Child's Best Shot: A parent's guide to vaccination.** 3rd edition (2006). Dr. Ron Gold.
- **What every parent should know about vaccines (2003).** Dr. Paul Offitt and Dr. Louis M. Bell.

Giving your child more than one vaccine at a time

Recommended immunizations begin at two months of age to protect infants from diseases that can be very serious for them. Depending on your child's age, he or she may have to get more than one vaccine at the same time. This recommended practice has many advantages but there are still questions you may have.

Why should my child get more than one vaccine at the same time?

Thanks to vaccines, children are protected against more devastating diseases than ever before. Vaccines are recommended for children at ages when they are at greatest risk for specific diseases and when the vaccines will give the best protection. To ensure your child is fully protected, it is important that he or she get the vaccines when they are recommended. Not immunizing your child will leave your child unprotected at a time when the risk for the disease is greatest.

Is giving more than one vaccine at the same time as effective as giving them separately?

Yes, giving more than one vaccine at the same time is just as effective as giving them separately. Delaying one or more vaccine shots to a later clinic visit could increase the risk of your child being exposed to serious diseases.

Is giving more than one vaccine at the same time risky for my child?

No. Studies show that many vaccine shots can be safely given at the same clinic visit. Every vaccine is tested many times before being licensed for use. The safety of vaccines is continuously checked for as long as the vaccine is being used. Studies show that children – even infants – can handle many shots at once.

Does giving more than one vaccine at the same time overload my child's immune system?

No. Infants and children are exposed to millions of different germs and bacteria everyday. According to Dr. Gold (2006), a paediatrician from the Canadian Paediatric Society, it would take more than 10,000 vaccines to “use up” or overload an infant's immune system. Having several vaccines at once is safe, even for a newborn.

Are there more side effects with giving more than one vaccine at the same time?

No. Getting several vaccine shots during one clinic visit does not cause more side effects. The risks from the vaccines are much, much less than the risks from the diseases themselves. Most side effects from vaccines are mild, such as soreness where the shot was given or a low grade fever (less than 40°C or 104°F). After getting the vaccine, children may cry and be fussy because of pain where the shot was given. Serious side effects are rare.

What are the benefits to giving several vaccines at the same time?

Sometimes, more than one vaccine may be recommended for children at a given age. When your child is vaccinated at the recommended age, he or she gains protection at a time of highest risk for these diseases. Studies also show that an increased number of clinic visits for separate vaccine shots can be more stressful for children. Getting more than one vaccine at the same time will reduce the number of visits to the doctor and may reduce the stress children experience with each visit.