
Rotarix™ Oral Vaccine Administration For Health Care Providers

This fact sheet provides basic information. It is not intended to provide or take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

The following information is provided for all health care providers administering the Rotarix™ oral vaccine for the first time.

Patient care & preparation

Health care providers should:

- Ensure the infant is the appropriate age to receive the Rotarix™ vaccine (i.e., six to 24 weeks of age);
- Establish if the infant is healthy before administering the vaccine (i.e., no fever over 38°C, diarrhea and/or vomiting);
- Screen each infant for contraindications (e.g., intussusception), precautions and allergies to any previous vaccine prior to vaccine administration;
- Assess if the infant:
 - is taking steroids of any sort other than inhaled asthma sprays or steroid creams (e.g., cortisone or prednisone) that may impair their immune response to the vaccine;
 - has received a recent blood transfusion or blood products, including immunoglobulins in the past 42 days;
 - has a disease or is having treatment which causes low immunity (e.g., leukemia, cancer, HIV/AIDS, radiotherapy or chemotherapy); and
 - has severe allergy to latex.
- Provide education to the parent or caregiver on careful hand hygiene when changing the infant's diaper, especially if the infant lives with someone who has a disease or is having treatment which causes low immunity (e.g., leukemia, cancer, HIV/AIDS, radiotherapy or chemotherapy);
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that informed consent for the immunization is obtained from the appropriate parent/guardian;
- Provide position and comfort measures during vaccine administration;
- Follow standard precautions for infection control to minimize the risks of spreading disease during vaccine administration; and
- Store, handle and prepare vaccine properly to maintain the integrity of the vaccine.

Special handling instructions for Rotarix™ vaccine

Oral vaccines should be administered prior to administering injections or performing other procedures that might cause discomfort.

Rotarix™ is presented as a clear, colorless liquid, free of visible particles, for administration. The vaccine is ready to use; no reconstitution or dilution is required.

Always check the expiry date of the vaccine on the label and packaging. The Rotarix™ vaccine should be stored between +2°C to +8°C, in the original package and protected from light.

The rotavirus vaccine should be administered orally without mixing with any other vaccines or solutions.

Instructions for using the Rotarix™ vaccine oral applicator:

Note: Rotavirus vaccine must not be administered by injection

1. Remove the vaccine from the refrigerator immediately prior to use.
2. Remove the protective tip cap from the oral applicator.
3. Ask the parent or caregiver to hold the infant in the nursing or feeding position (seated in a reclining position).
4. Administer the entire amount of the liquid slowly down one side of the inner mouth cheek (between the cheek and gum) toward the back of the infant's mouth and allow the infant to swallow the vaccine.
 - Do not administer the vaccine too far back into the mouth which may initiate the gag reflex.
 - Do not administer the vaccine directly into the throat.
 - Detailed information on oral delivery of the vaccine is included in the vaccine product monograph.
5. The oral vaccine must be swallowed and retained.
6. To prevent spitting or failed swallowing, stimulate the rooting-and-sucking reflex for the infant to suck the medication from the syringe and swallow. For infants who are five months of age and older, lightly stroke the throat in a downward motion to stimulate the infant to swallow.
7. If the infant spits out, fails to swallow, or regurgitates most of the vaccine dose, a single replacement dose may be given at the same vaccination visit. The infant should continue to receive any remaining doses in the recommended series. Please check the vaccine product monograph for details on regurgitation procedures.
8. Discard the empty applicator and cap in approved biological waste containers.
9. Once the vaccine has been administered, the infant may be breastfed or given something to drink (e.g. formula).

There is no restriction on the infant's consumption of food or liquid, including breast milk, either before or after the vaccination.

Documentation

Document the immunization information in the patient's health records according to the standards of the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) and your regulatory college.

Update the patient's personal immunization record "Yellow Card" each time you administer a vaccine.

Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFIs)

When all vaccines have been administered, the patient should remain in the office for a 15 minute period of observation for any adverse vaccine events.

Similar to all vaccines, rotavirus vaccine needs to be monitored for safety and for any AEFIs. Physicians, nurses and pharmacists should report adverse events associated with the administration of an immunizing agent (vaccine).

Adverse vaccine events should be reported to your local public health unit.

Who should I contact if I have any questions?

For more information please contact your local public health unit.