

IMMUNIZATION

Health for Life!

What you need to know...

Immunization prevents disease. In fact, it has saved millions of lives and is considered to be one of the best, safest, and most cost effective public health interventions.

Before Canada's immunization programs, thousands of Canadians, including babies and children, died or fell seriously ill from infectious diseases. Since immunization programs were introduced, many deadly diseases have become rare and one, smallpox, has been eliminated.

The Thunder Bay District Health Unit contributes to our high immunization rate by verifying immunization records of all children in school and daycare, holding immunization clinics at schools, in the community and at the Health Unit, providing education during prenatal classes and through health promotion campaigns.

Please read through this report to learn more about the value of immunization.



**Vaccines help
us keep each
other healthy.
Show you care.
Get immunized.**

2007 Report
to the Community



Thunder Bay District
Health Unit
www.tbdhu.com

Should we

Isn't there mercury in vaccines, and isn't that harmful to my child?

Routine childhood vaccines in Canada do not use mercury-containing compounds such as thimerosal, with the exception of influenza vaccine. However, there is very little thimerosal in the flu vaccine – far less than could cause harm. The original theoretical concerns about mercury were based on vaccines used in the USA, where more childhood vaccines contained thimerosal than in Canada. A comprehensive review by the Institute of Medicine found no evidence that it caused harm to any child.

I've heard that immunization can cause autism, multiple sclerosis and other serious diseases. Is this true?

No. There is no evidence that immunization causes autism, multiple sclerosis, neurological disorders, diabetes, or any autoimmune disease. Over the years, various claims linking immunization to other diseases have arisen. Such claims are generally unreliable and have not stood up to scientific investigation.

For example, extensive reviews and proper scientific studies have found no evidence that the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine causes autism or any other serious disease. The most notorious study linking this vaccine with autism has been discredited. In fact, ten of the thirteen study authors have retracted their findings and the lead author is being investigated for professional misconduct.

I don't need to immunize my baby because diseases like measles and polio aren't around any more. Right?

High immunization rates in Canada mean diseases like polio, rubella and diphtheria that killed or disabled thousands before immunization no longer affect the vast majority of Canadians. However, these diseases are still present in many parts of the world, and fast and frequent air travel means that they are only an airplane ride away.

If fewer people in Canada were immunized, outbreaks of serious illnesses like rubella and mumps would occur. In fact, outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases occur regularly in North America in groups of people that are not immunized or not fully immunized. Most of these outbreaks remain relatively small because most people in the population are immunized. But some, like the ongoing mumps epidemic in Canada and the United States, have affected thousands of people.

IMMUNIZATION WORKS

In North America, immunization against smallpox began in 1800. By 1977, the World Health Organization declared that it was completely eliminated. Today, efforts are being made to eliminate polio and measles through immunizations, worldwide.

Effect of Immunization on Some Disease Rates in Canada

DISEASE	PEAK CASES BEFORE ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION	CASES IN 2004
MEASLES	300,000	7
POLIO	20,000	0
RUBELLA	69,000	9



immunize our child?

I want my child's immune system to develop naturally.

In a very real sense, immunization is "natural." Vaccines trigger your body's immune system in exactly the same way as natural infections do. With immunizations, your child doesn't have to get sick to be protected from disease.

Without Immunization



With Immunization



Here's how vaccines work:

1. The vaccine is made from a tiny amount of the disease germ that has been killed or weakened so it can't cause illness. For example, measles vaccine is made from weakened measles virus.
2. Once the vaccine is introduced to the body, the body starts attacking the disease germ and builds up more and more protection (antibodies) against it.
3. These new antibodies are the weapons the body needs to fight off future exposure to the infections and to prevent illness.

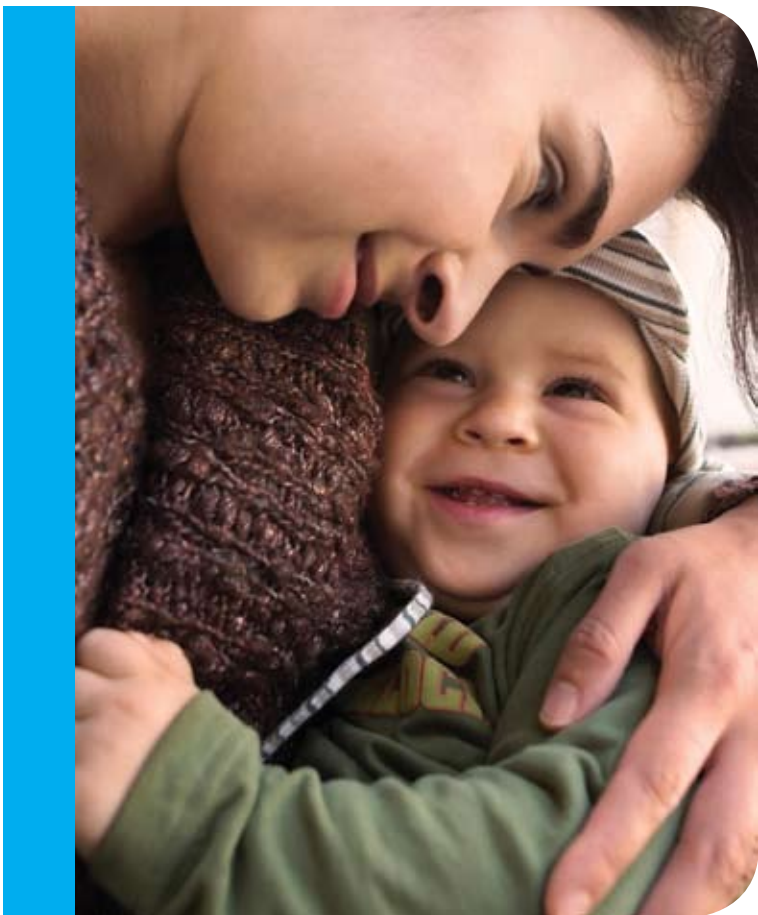
Join the 97% of parents in Thunder Bay who immunize their children.

VACCINES ARE SAFE AND WELL-TESTED.

Many years of research are required before a vaccine is approved for use. Even after it is approved and put on the market, a vaccine is continuously monitored for side effects.

The side effects of most vaccines are mild. The most common are a sore arm, redness where the shot is given, or a low grade fever. Serious side effects are very rare. Before an immunization is given, your health care provider will discuss the benefits, risks and side effects with you.





Daycare

What immunizations should my child get before two years of age?

Five vaccines protect your child from eleven diseases.

Before effective vaccines became widely available, virtually all children had to suffer through “the childhood diseases.” We sometimes forget that when our grandparents were young diphtheria, whooping cough, polio, measles, and other infectious diseases sickened, disabled or killed thousands of children. Fortunately, we now have vaccines to prevent diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox, and some causes of pneumonia, meningitis and blood infections. These vaccines are considered so important that they are provided free to all Ontarians.

Remember that for most vaccines full protection requires more than one dose, and they have to be spread out over the first two years of a child’s life. Some immunizations also require boosters later in life.

REMEMBER!

The Immunization Record is required when:

- starting day nursery or school
- transferring to a different school
- going to camp
- starting university, college or a job
- receiving emergency health care
- travelling to other countries

LOST YOUR IMMUNIZATION RECORD?

If an Immunization Record is lost, you will need to contact the health care provider who administered each immunization. The Health Unit only has this information if we provided the vaccines, or if the record has been provided to us. You can give your child’s immunization history to the Health Unit by phone, mail, or fax.

Schedule of Routine Immunizations

	2 MTHS	4 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS	15 MTHS	18 MTHS	4-6 YRS	GRADE 7	GRADE 8	14-16 YRS	ENTIRE LIFE
ONE VACCINE * Diphtheria, Hib, Tetanus, Polio, Pertussis	●	●	●			●	●			●	
ONE VACCINE Mumps, Measles, Rubella (MMR)				●		●					
Meningococcal				●				**			
Pneumococcal	●	●	●		●						
Chicken Pox					●		***				
Human papillomavirus									3 DOSES		
Hepatitis B								2 DOSES			
ONE VACCINE Diphtheria, Tetanus											EVERY 10 YEARS
Influenza											EVERY FALL

If your child has missed any of these vaccines, please contact your doctor or the Health Unit.

* Hib is not included in vaccines administered after 18 months of age. Polio is not included in vaccines administered after 4-6 years of age.

** Children can receive meningococcal vaccine in grade 7, if missed during infancy.

*** Children can receive chicken pox vaccine at 5 years of age, if missed during infancy.

and School

Does my child have to be immunized to start daycare or school?

There is legislation in Ontario to ensure that children's immunizations are up-to-date before entering school or daycare. Thanks in part to this legislation, 97% of Thunder Bay District children in school are protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Protect those who cannot protect themselves.

There are people who cannot get vaccines for medical reasons or whose bodies do not respond to immunizations. There are also a few who ask to be exempted based on their beliefs. The only way to protect these people against vaccine-preventable diseases is for nearly everyone else to be immunized. Infectious disease cannot spread if the vast majority of people are immunized. Therefore, the immunity of those around them serves to protect vulnerable people from diseases which their bodies cannot fight. This is called herd immunity.

Where do I get these immunizations?

Infants usually receive immunizations from their family physician or a nurse practitioner. The Thunder Bay District Health Unit will provide immunizations for children at our weekly immunization clinic, or through our nurse practitioner.

How do I keep my child up-to-date?

Keep track with the Yellow Card.

We know the immunization schedule is complicated. That is why, when your child gets his or her first immunization, your health care provider will give you a yellow Immunization Record with the current immunization schedule printed on it. It will be used throughout your child's life to help keep track of immunizations. Keep it somewhere safe and bring it to every medical appointment.



ENTERING DAYCARE AND KINDERGARTEN

Daycares and schools will provide parents or caregivers with a School Entry Immunization Form (also available at tbdhu.com/immunization) to be filled out with child's immunization history. Submit the form to the Health Unit to find out if the child has the required immunizations.

IMMUNIZATION EXEMPTIONS

Children who cannot or will not be immunized for medical reasons or because of their parents' beliefs may receive exemption from immunization. Medical exemptions need to be signed by a physician. Other exemptions are provided by the Health Unit's Commissioner of Oaths. However, for certain outbreaks all children with exemptions would have to stay home until the disease is no longer present.





Youth

Are there any diseases my older children need to be protected against?

Yes. In grade seven and eight, three optional vaccines are offered in schools for free: meningococcal C, hepatitis B, and human papillomavirus (HPV).

Hepatitis B and HPV are infections that are usually spread by intimate or sexual contact. We realize that most grade 7 and 8 children are not sexually active, and that is exactly why we offer the vaccines when we do. The vaccines are most effective if they are given **BEFORE** people become at risk for infection.

The meningococcal vaccine is intended to prevent outbreaks of bacterial meningitis, a rare but deadly disease. Outbreaks of meningococcal disease are most common among high school and university aged students.

Hepatitis B vaccine protects against hepatitis B infection, which can be spread through sexual contact, sharing needles, body piercing and tattooing with dirty equipment.

HPV vaccine is intended to prevent genital warts and cervical cancer later in life. But it is only effective if the vaccine is given **before** girls become sexually active. The HPV vaccine cannot help once a person is infected.

Student immunization records are assessed yearly.

If a student is not up-to-date for his or her age, immunizations will be offered at a school clinic. Consent forms will be distributed to students and parents prior to this clinic. School clinic dates and a description of the immunizations being offered are available from the school or the Health Unit.

VACCINE TO PREVENT CERVICAL CANCER

In September 2007, the Health Unit began offering the HPV vaccine to grade 8 girls, free of charge. The vaccine is given, with parental consent, during School Immunization Clinics. Three doses of the vaccine are required over a 6-month period for full protection. The vaccine will not prevent all cervical cancers. It is very effective at protecting against the two strains of HPV that cause about 70% of cervical cancers, as well as the two strains most commonly causing genital warts. Therefore, those immunized will still require regular Pap tests to be screened for cervical cancer that may have been caused by one of the other 11 HPV strains.



Adult

As an adult, are there vaccines I need to keep myself and my loved ones healthy?

Yes. Every ten years, a booster is needed to protect against tetanus and diphtheria. If you are planning to travel abroad, you may also need additional vaccines.

Before you book your trip, call the Health Unit's Travel Clinic.

Few places in the world are as safe as Canada. Your risk of becoming ill depends on where you plan to travel, your length of stay and type of travel (backpacking versus a hotel stay, for example).

Contact the Health Unit's Travel Clinic 6 to 8 weeks before you leave to find out if immunizations are required or recommended to the country you plan to visit.

A yearly flu shot is important.

A flu shot is perhaps the most important vaccine a person can get to protect themselves and loved ones from the potentially serious effects of influenza. In fact, the Ontario government recommends that everyone over 6 months of age should get a yearly flu shot, unless there is a medical reason not to.

The flu is a disease which attacks your body's respiratory (breathing) system. It easily spreads from person-to-person through coughing, sneezing or even just shaking hands.

The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot every year. The flu shot is free and is provided by physicians, nurse practitioners, and at Health Unit flu clinics.

The flu shot isn't perfect. Every year the flu bug changes a little bit and every year there's a race against time to create a new flu vaccine that will fight the new bug. When there is a good match between the flu strain that is circulating and the vaccine, the vaccine will protect 70% to 90% of healthy adults and children, but less than 60% of those over age 60.

Because the immune systems of older adults do not react as well to vaccines, it is important for their relatives and caregivers to get immunized to minimize the chance of spreading flu to them.

The Health Unit administered 15,654 flu shots in 2006.



MORE DANGEROUS THAN YOU THINK

The flu/pneumonia is the number one cause of hospitalization and death in Canada due to an infectious disease. Health Canada estimates that, every year, between 4,000 to 8,000 people die from the flu or its complications.



LOCAL HEALTH CARE WORKER IMMUNIZATION RATES

Despite the recommendation that all health care workers receive an annual flu shot, actual immunization rates vary considerably between facilities.

The following table shows the 2006 median immunization rate for staff in long term care facilities and hospitals.

LOCATION	LONG TERM CARE	HOSPITALS
ONTARIO	83%	57%
T. BAY CITY DISTRICT FACILITIES	48%	42%
	94%	89%

HEALTH UNIT CLINIC HOURS

Immunization Clinic

Drop in
Wednesdays, 1:30 – 6:00 pm
(807) 625-8810

Flu vaccines will not be available at this clinic. Please visit one of the locations listed at right.

Travel Clinic

By appointment only
Thursdays, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon
(807) 625-8810 or (807) 625-5942

Nurse Practitioner

By appointment only
(807) 625-8844

TOLL FREE 1-888-294-6630

Health Care Workers and the Flu Shot

Workers in hospitals, clinics and seniors' homes have close contact with the elderly. This increases the risk that flu can spread. Because of this risk, the Ontario government recognizes these caregivers as a priority group for receiving an annual flu shot. The provincial goal is to have 70% of long term care workers immunized against the flu each year.

2007 Flu Clinics

Please remember to wear short sleeves. Flu vaccines will not be available at the Health Unit's regular Wednesday immunization clinics. The flu clinic schedule is also available online at www.tbdhu.com/flu.

Thunder Bay

(807) 624-9082

Wednesday, Nov. 7

Evangel Church
1260 Balmoral Street
1:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Thursday, Nov. 8

55 Plus Centre
700 River Street
9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Friday, Nov. 9

55 Plus Centre
700 River Street
9:30 – 3:30 pm

Monday, Nov. 12

Knights of Columbus Hall
301 May Street South
9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Tuesday, Nov. 13

Current River
Community Centre
450 Dewe Avenue
9:30 am – 3:00 pm

Wednesday, Nov. 14

Evangel Church
1260 Balmoral Street
1:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Thursday, Nov. 15

Needing Municipal Office
R.R. #7, Highway 61
4:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Thursday, Nov. 15

Slovak Legion
801 Atlantic Avenue
3:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Friday, Nov. 16

Confederation College
1450 Nakina Drive
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Monday, Nov. 19

MacGregor Community
Centre, 800 Lakeshore Drive
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Monday, Nov. 19

North McIntyre Community
Centre, R.R. #12
2051 Government Road
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Wednesday, Nov. 21

Evangel Church
1260 Balmoral Street
1:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Wednesday, Nov. 28

Evangel Church
1260 Balmoral Street
1:30 pm – 5:30 pm

District

1-866-607-3337

Tuesday, Nov. 6

Schreiber Recreation Centre
6:00 pm- 8:00 pm

Monday, Nov. 12

Nipigon Community Centre
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Tuesday, Nov. 13

Red Rock Public School
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm



Thunder Bay

999 Balmoral St.
Thunder Bay, ON
P7B 6E7
(807) 625-5900

District Offices

Geraldton

P.O. Box 1360
510 Hogarth
Avenue West
Geraldton, ON
P0T 1M0
(807) 854-0454

Manitouwadge

P.O. Box 385
Manitouwadge
Health Care Centre
1 Health Care Cre.
Manitouwadge, ON
P0T 2C0
(807) 826-4061

Marathon

P.O. Box 384
Marathon
Library Building
24 Peninsula Rd.
Marathon, ON
P0T 2E0
(807) 229-1820

Nipigon

P.O. Box 15
Nipigon District
Memorial Hospital
125 Hogan Road
Nipigon, ON
P0T 2J0
(807) 887-3031

Schreiber

P.O. Box 698
Jack Stokes
Medical Building
501 Scotia Sreet
Schreiber, ON
P0T 2S0
(807) 824-2413

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