



# Your Child's Vaccines – Babies born on or after 1 October 2024

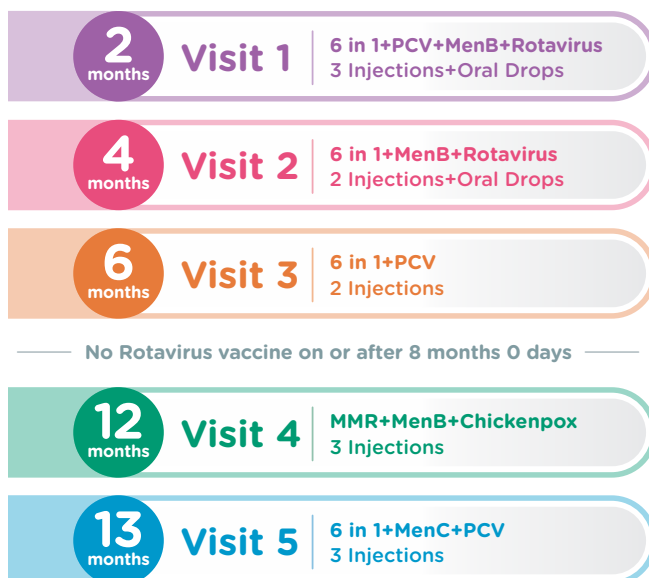
Information for parents and guardians who have come to Ireland from other countries

In this leaflet you will find information about vaccines for your child. Vaccines help keep your child healthy by protecting them against preventable infectious diseases.

## Why are vaccines important?

Vaccines protect babies and children from infections that can make them seriously ill. Very young babies are most at risk from these infections, so vaccines are started as early as possible.

In Ireland the vaccine schedule starts at 2 months of age and the recommended vaccines are given over 5 visits usually to your General Practitioner or GP when your baby is 2, 4, 6, 12 and 13 months of age. Vaccines given to babies in Ireland protect them against infections that are common or very serious in Ireland.



## What vaccines are recommended in Ireland?

Children are recommended vaccines to protect them against infections that are common in Ireland or that could make them very sick.

## What are the differences between the vaccines given in other countries and the vaccines given in Ireland?

Many of the vaccines given in Ireland are also given in other countries. For example, vaccines to protect against Diphtheria, Polio, Tetanus and Measles are offered to children in most countries.

There may be differences in some of the vaccines recommended in Ireland compared with other countries. This is because there may be differences between diseases that are common in Ireland compared to other countries. For example in Ireland we give vaccines that protect children against meningococcal B and C disease. These infections can cause meningitis and septicaemia. These vaccines are not part of the immunisation schedule in some countries. But they are recommended in Ireland to protect children against these very serious infections.

## My child had all their vaccines in another country. Why do they need other vaccines now that they are in Ireland?

Because your child is now living in Ireland, they should follow the vaccination schedule from Ireland. The vaccines recommended in Ireland protect children against diseases that are common in Ireland or that could make them very sick.

Your child should “catch-up” with the vaccines that are recommended in Ireland. They don’t need to repeat vaccines that they already received in another country.

## What diseases do these additional vaccines protect your child against?

### Rotavirus oral vaccine

Rotavirus is a viral infection which causes diarrhoea and vomiting in infants and young children. Most children will recover at home but some need to be admitted to hospital. Around 880 children under the age of 5 were admitted to hospital with rotavirus infection every year in Ireland before the rotavirus vaccine was introduced. This number has fallen dramatically since the rotavirus vaccine was introduced. Rotavirus vaccine can only be given to babies under 8 months of age.

### **Meningococcal B (MenB) vaccine**

The MenB vaccine helps to protect your child from meningococcal B disease. This is a serious bacterial infection which can cause meningitis (inflammation of the lining around the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning). Meningococcal B causes most of the infections and deaths from meningitis of young children in Ireland. MenB vaccine is not usually given after the age of 2 years of age.

### **Meningococcal C (MenC) vaccine**

The MenC vaccine helps to protect your child from meningococcal C disease. This is also a serious bacterial infection which can cause meningitis (inflammation of the lining around the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning).

### **Pneumococcal (PCV) vaccine**

PCV vaccine protects against disease caused by pneumococcus bacteria. These bacteria can cause diseases such as meningitis (inflammation of the lining around the brain), pneumonia (a lung infection) or septicaemia (blood poisoning). PCV vaccine is usually not given after the age of 2 years.

### **Chickenpox (Varicella)**

Chickenpox is caused by a very contagious virus. It causes an itchy blistering rash and other symptoms like a fever and feeling unwell. Chickenpox can cause more serious illness such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), pneumonia (infection of the lung) and myocarditis (inflammation of the heart).

### **What are the side effects of these vaccines?**

Side effects after the vaccines are usually mild and last only for a few days.

- A fever (high temperature) is common after a MenB vaccine. Please bring liquid infant paracetamol to your first two visits if your child is getting MenB vaccine. This will help the fever.
- Sometimes children can get soreness, swelling and redness in the area where the injection was given. Make sure clothes are not too tight.
- Mild diarrhoea is normal after the rotavirus oral vaccine. Give your child plenty of milk. Wash your hands carefully after changing and disposing of your child's nappy.
- A cuddle and a feed will help your child feel better after their vaccines.
- Sometimes children get a mild rash with a few spots after the chickenpox vaccine. This can happen 5-26 days after the vaccination. The rash goes away on its own and does not need treatment. If your child develops this rash you can read more [here](#) or talk to your nurse or doctor.

### **Where can I get my baby vaccinated?**

In Ireland family doctors (GPs) provide vaccination for children. The practice nurse usually gives babies their vaccines, under the direction of the GP. There may be other clinics organised by the health service to give children the vaccines that they need. For example, nurses and doctors from the Irish Health Service (HSE) organise clinics to vaccinate children who are refugees or protection applicants.

### **How do I make an appointment with a GP?**

You will need to book an appointment with a GP. For information about how to find a GP see information [here](#). If you don't have a GP, the local HSE vaccination team may organise clinics where your child can be vaccinated.

### **What happens at the vaccination visit?**

Before giving the vaccines, the nurse or doctor will speak to you about the vaccines your child needs and talk to you about each vaccine. After getting the vaccines you will get a 'Vaccine Passport' document detailing the vaccines given to your child. It is very important that you keep the Vaccine Passport safe as a record of your child's vaccinations. It is important you bring this record with you to any further vaccination visits.

### **Do I have to pay for vaccination?**

No. Vaccination is free in Ireland.

### **Are any vaccines recommended for older children?**

When children are in school they are recommended vaccines.

**In Junior Infants (age 5):** The MMRV vaccine to protect against measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox and a booster dose of Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (whooping cough) and Polio vaccines. These vaccines are offered in school.

**In 1st year of secondary school (age 12):** The HPV, MenACWY (meningococcal ACWY) and a booster dose of Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (whooping cough). These vaccines are given in school.

### **Are any vaccines recommended for adults?**

Yes. Adults who have not received some vaccines are recommended to receive them. For example the MMR vaccine that protects against measles mumps and rubella is recommended for adults who have never received this vaccine. Talk to a member of the local HSE vaccination team, your GP or nurse.

### **I have some questions about vaccination, who can I talk to?**

Talk to a member of the local HSE vaccination team, your GP or your Practice Nurse. If other clinics are organised by the health service to give children vaccines, you can talk to the doctor or nurse at these clinics too.