

Immunising your baby

by Ronel van der Watt

Immunisation is used to prevent childhood diseases. It is important for individuals, but also plays a big role in preventing the outbreak of disease in communities. It is very important to follow the schedule set out below.

Age	Vaccine	What is it for?	How is it administered?
At birth	BCG	Tuberculosis (TB)	Small injection in right upper arm
	Polio	Polio (A disease that causes paralysis)	Drops by mouth
6 weeks 10 weeks 14 weeks	Polio	Polio (A disease that causes paralysis)	Drops by mouth
	DTP & Hib	Diphtheria (A serious infection of the throat) Tetanus (Lockjaw – infection that occurs after a cut or puncture wound and causes muscle spasm of the jaw) Pertussis (whooping cough) Haemophilus Influenza Type B (An organism that causes meningitis, pneumonia, ear infections, etc.)	Injection in left thigh
	Hepatitis B	Hepatitis B (Serious infection of the liver)	Injection in right thigh
9 months	Measles	Measles	Injection in right thigh
18 months	Polio	Polio (A disease that causes paralysis)	Drops by mouth
	DTP	Diphtheria (A serious infection of the throat) Tetanus (Lockjaw – infection that occurs after a cut or puncture wound and causes muscle spasm of the jaw) Pertussis (whooping cough)	Injection in left arm
	Measles	Measles	Injection in right arm
5 years	Polio	Polio (A disease that causes paralysis)	Drops by mouth
	DT	Diphtheria (A serious infection of the throat) Tetanus (Lockjaw – infection that occurs after a cut or puncture wound and causes muscle spasm of the jaw)	Injection in left arm

Immunisations are safe. The side effects are minor compared to the effect of the disease. With the polio vaccine there are no side effects – it only tastes very bitter. With other vaccines there may be a slight fever or swelling and redness a few days after the vaccination. Call the clinic if the fever or swelling continues for longer than three days. With the measles vaccine, there may be a rash one or two weeks after the vaccination.

The TB vaccine causes a small red, raised area on the arm a few weeks after administration. It can even burst open and drain some puss. It can take many weeks to heal and leaves a small scar on the arm. This is normal. Do not put any ointment or Vicks on the area. Keep it dry and clean by washing it with soap during the baby's bath and drying it softly with the towel. [UM](#)