

Vaccinations for children

All children born in New Zealand are recorded on the National Immunisation Register. This is a confidential, computerised, information system that records children's vaccinations. Your lead maternity carer, GP, or practice nurse will discuss the register with you, including what information is collected and stored, and who can see it.

Children may visit many different healthcare providers. The National Immunisation Register makes sure information about your child's vaccinations is always available, even if you move away or change doctor.



It also helps to make sure that your child receives the right vaccinations at the right ages. It does this by reminding your healthcare provider when your child's vaccinations are due, and when they are overdue.

General practices, district health boards, and the Ministry of Health also use the register to monitor how many people are being vaccinated and to assess the risk of a disease epidemic. An epidemic happens when a disease is widespread in the community. To reduce the spread of disease, New Zealand health professionals aim to ensure 95% of children under the age of 5 are vaccinated.

If you choose not to have your child vaccinated, this is recorded on the register.

If you don't want your child's vaccinations details to be recorded, you may opt your child off the register. You can still have your child vaccinated. You will need to complete and sign a form that your lead maternity carer, GP, or practice nurse will provide.

When should I enrol my baby?

It's best to contact your general practice and enrol your baby soon after your baby is born, as their first vaccinations are due when they are 6 weeks old.

Preschool vaccinations

There are several serious vaccine-preventable diseases that can harm or even be fatal for babies. Make sure you protect your baby by having them vaccinated on time to ensure a healthy start. You will not need to pay for these vaccinations at your general practice.

Your general practice team are there to support you and your baby, to answer any concerns you may have, and to give any advice you need after the vaccinations.

The Ministry of Health recommends that you have your child vaccinated according to the National Immunisation Schedule. Vaccinations are scheduled at:



- 6 weeks, 3 months, and 5 months to protect babies against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib disease), rotavirus, and pneumococcal disease.
- 15 months to protect them against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), chickenpox (varicella), and a booster dose for Hib and pneumococcal disease
- 4 years to protect them against measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), and polio.

From the age of 6 months children can also have the seasonal flu vaccination. This is normally available at general practices between 1 March and 31 December each year.

Getting vaccinations on time helps to reduce the chance of infections being passed to young babies who may not have had all their vaccinations, or to other children who can't be vaccinated because of medical conditions.

If your baby is born prematurely and still in hospital when their vaccinations are due, they will be vaccinated there.

If your child is not fully vaccinated, they can be excluded from school or preschool if there is a disease outbreak.



Helpful hints for new parents

Usually the practice nurse gives vaccinations, but the GP often likes to meet the new baby and do a six-week check, so don't be surprised if you see them both then. This helps the general practice team develop an understanding of you and your family's changing needs.

Take your child's Well Child Tamariki Ora health book with you every time you go for their vaccinations. The practice nurse will record the details in it for you to keep. You will need to show it when your child has their B4 school check and when they enrol at school.

If you are bringing other children along or are getting more than one child vaccinated at the same time, let the practice nurse know and they will do all they can to make the visit less stressful.

 *HealthInfo recommends the following pages*

- Immunisation Advisory Centre (www.immune.org.nz)
The Immunisation Advisory Centre is a nationwide organisation based at the School of Population Health at the University of Auckland. This website includes a lot of information about diseases and vaccination or immunisation.
- Fightflu.co.nz (www.fightflu.co.nz)
Helpful information about the flu vaccine.

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