Vaccinations

Protecting your child against infectious diseases

More information is available...

► from the brochure „Impfschutz für die ganze Familie – 20 Fragen 20 Antworten“ [Protecting your family with vaccines – 20 questions, 20 answers]
Order no.: 62000219
Order from: BZgA, 50819 Köln or via email: order@bzga.de

► in the brochure das baby: Informationen für Eltern über das erste Lebensjahr [The Baby: Information for Parents on the First Year of Life]
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► from www.kindergesundheit-info.de

► from www.impfen-info.de

► from the Robert Koch Institute website at www.rki.de

Overview of the most important vaccinations during childhood and adolescence

According to the recommendations issued by the German Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO), as of August 2016

One less pneumococcus injection

Since 2015, infants are now recommended to receive three pneumococcus vaccinations instead of four – at the ages of two, four and eleven months. Premature babies receive an additional injection at the age of three months.

Pneumococcus bacteria can cause middle-ear infections, pneumonia and meningitis.

Pneumococcal disease

Recommendations by the Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) as of August 2015

Immunisation Schedule 2015/2016 – Which vaccinations are recommended?

First, second and third injections

- Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b)
- Pneumococcal disease
- Hib
- Hepatitis B
- Polio (Poliomyelitis)
- Mumps
- Measles
- Rubella (German measles)
- Meningococcal disease
- Measles
- Rubella
- Chickpevirus (Hepatitis E) and
- Cervical cancer (HPV)

Flu (influenza)

People with chronic diseases (annually)

Parents on the First Year of Life

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Surveillance of the most important vaccinations during childhood and adolescence

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Vaccinations: A safe and sound decision

For many parents, the words “childhood diseases” bring to mind harmless infections whose symptoms are mild and have no lasting complications. Yet suffering through a disease such as measles, mumps and whooping cough is anything but “child’s play”. These illnesses can have very serious consequences and some children may suffer from damage done by the disease for the rest of their lives. Even with all the advances in modern medicine, this damage cannot always be prevented.

The German Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) recommends the following vaccinations for children and adolescents:

- Rotaviruses (infants aged 6 to 24 or 32 weeks)
- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Whooping cough (Pertussis)
- Polio
- Hepatitis B
- Hib (Haemophilus influenzae b)
- Meningococcus
- Pneumococcus
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) (girls aged 9 to 14 years)
- Hib (Haemophilus influenzae b)
- Meningococcus
- Pneumococcus
- Measles
- Mumps
- German measles (rubella)
- Chickenpox
- Influenza (for chronic conditions)
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) (girls aged 9 to 14 years)

Why should I have my child vaccinated?

Even though many infectious diseases have become rare in Germany thanks to consistent vaccination – state borders do not stop viruses or bacteria. Many people travel frequently and the risk that these diseases may be brought back into the country. Only a consistently high level of vaccination can prevent infectious diseases spreading again.

How does the immune system work?

Our immune system has the job of defending us against the pathogens that make us sick – like bacteria and viruses. When we become ill, specific antibodies are formed for this purpose, which are capable of rendering the pathogen harmless. At the same time, “memory cells” can be formed: if the pathogen is encountered again, the body can attack it immediately before we become sick.

It is precisely this procedure that a vaccination mimics. This is how vaccinations work:

1. Pathogens that have been weakened or killed off are administered to the body in tiny amounts that are incapable of causing a real infection.
2. The immune system reacts to the injection of pathogens and forms antibodies, which from then on circulate in the system.
3. If the body encounters the live pathogen, the antibodies can act immediately to stop an illness occurring.

Start immunisation at an early age

The body needs to be “trained” to be able to make enough antibodies against a specific infectious disease. For some diseases, this can only be achieved by receiving multiple doses of the vaccine. To achieve the best immunisation protection, it is important that vaccinations are given at the recommend times.

Catching up on missed vaccinations

If you ever miss a vaccination, you should catch up on the missed vaccination as soon as possible. Please see the back of the vaccination card for the most extensively researched vaccines in medicine. Mild reactions such as redness or swelling at the injection site, or even a slight rise in temperature, are possible. Generally, though, they offer no cause for concern. They are merely proof of the fact that the body is responding to the vaccination.

Some vaccinations offer lifelong protection, while others must be repeated one or more times during school age, adolescence and/or adulthood.

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Very few side effects

Some parents worry about the possibility of side effects from vaccination. Modern vaccines, however, are safe, have very few side effects, and are, in terms of safety, some of the most extensively researched drugs in medicine. Mild reactions such as redness or swelling at the injection site, or even a slight rise in temperature, are possible. Generally, though, they offer no cause for concern. They are merely proof of the fact that the body is responding to the vaccination.

Reimbursement of costs

The costs of the vaccinations recommended by the German Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) are paid for by public health insurers. This is regulated by the National Guidelines on Vaccination ("Schutzimpfungsrichtlinie").

Important!

Many vaccinations can be given during early routine check-ups (U4, U6, U7, U9 and J1). Your paediatrician will be happy to tell you more about the various options for combination vaccines.