



Immunization

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What is an immunization?

An immunization helps the body defend itself against an infectious disease. Most immunizations are given as injections in childhood, though several immunizations are boosted or given for the first time in adulthood.



Why is it significant?

An immunization spurs your immune system to create antibodies against a virus or bacteria, so that when you're exposed to it, your body can fight it off. Many vaccine-preventable diseases (including polio, mumps, measles, chickenpox, hepatitis B, meningitis, tetanus and diphtheria) will remain rare only so long as a significant proportion of the population continues to get immunized. Some immunizations have side effects.

What else should I be aware of?

In rare cases, some people experience an allergic reaction to an immunization. If your child has trouble breathing or swallowing, has a seizure, or displays any other unusual change, call 911. If their symptoms are less serious, call Healthlink at 403-943-LINK.

What can I do?

- ✓ Get immunized! As all major public health authorities recognize, the resulting protection from disease and improved public health far outweighs the rare side effects.



- ✓ If the area around the injection site reddens or grows swollen, apply ice for 10-20 minutes.
- ✓ Keep records of your child's immunizations. You may need them to show to the doctor, to enrol in certain programs or to travel overseas.
- ✓ If your child is going to be travelling abroad or in an environment with many other people (such as camp), ask your doctor about other immunizations.
- ✓ Contact the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion at www.immunize.cpha.ca or Alberta Health and Wellness at www.health.alberta.ca/health-info/immunization.html.
- ✓ Learn more about immunization by going to www.makinghealthhappen.com.



What can I give my child?

Your child may get a mild fever after being immunized. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen can help, but check with your doctor first if your child is a baby under three months of age. Don't give your child acetylsalicylic acid (ASA), better known as aspirin, without consulting your doctor. Taking ASA for the flu or chickenpox has been linked to Reye's syndrome in young people under the age of 20.



Go to MakingHealthHappen.com and enter **immun** in the search box to learn more about Immunizations.