



Rotavirus Vaccine

What is rotavirus?

Rotavirus is a virus that causes severe diarrhea, mostly in babies and young children. It is often accompanied by vomiting and fever.

Each year in the United States rotavirus is responsible for:

- More than 400,000 doctor visits
- More than 200,000 emergency room visits
- 55,000 to 70,000 hospitalizations
- 20 to 60 deaths

Almost all children in the U.S. are infected with rotavirus before their 5th birthday. Your child can get rotavirus infection by being around other children who are already infected.

Rotavirus Vaccine

Better hygiene and sanitation have not been very good at reducing rotavirus disease. Rotavirus vaccine is the best way to protect children against rotavirus disease.

Rotavirus vaccine is an oral (swallowed) vaccine: it is **not given by infection.**

Rotavirus vaccine will not prevent diarrhea or vomiting caused by other germs, but it is very good at preventing diarrhea and vomiting caused by rotavirus. About 98% of children who get the vaccine are protected from severe rotavirus diarrhea, and about 74% do not get rotavirus diarrhea at all.

Children who get the vaccine are also much less likely to be hospitalized or to see a doctor because of rotavirus infection.

When should my child get the Rotavirus Vaccine?

Children should get 3 doses of rotavirus vaccine. They are recommended at these ages:

- First Dose: 2 months of age
- Second Dose: 4 months of age
- Third Dose 6 months of age
- The first dose should be given between 6 and 12 weeks of age. The vaccine has not been studied when started among children outside that age range.
- Children should have gotten all 3 doses by 32 weeks of age.

Rotavirus vaccine may be given at the same time as other childhood vaccines. Children who get the vaccine may be fed normally afterward.

Some children should not get rotavirus or should wait:

- A child who has had a severe (life-threatening) allergic reaction to as dose of rotavirus vaccine should not get another dose. A child who has a severe (life-threatening) allergy to any component of rotavirus vaccine should not get the vaccine. Tell your doctor if your child has any sever allergies that you know of.

TRAVEL VACCINATION CENTER

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- Children who are moderately or severely ill at the time the vaccination is scheduled should probably wait until they recover. This includes children who have diarrhea or vomiting.

What are the risks from rotavirus vaccine?

A vaccine, like any medicine, could possibly cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of rotavirus vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small. Getting rotavirus vaccine is much safer than getting the disease.

Mild problems

Children are slightly (1-3%) more likely to have mild, temporary diarrhea or vomiting within 7 days after getting a dose of rotavirus vaccine than children who have not gotten the vaccine.

Moderate or severe reactions have not been associated with this vaccine.

If rare reactions occur with any new product, they may not be identified until thousands, or millions, of people have used it.

What if there is a moderate or severe reaction? What should I look for?

- Any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

What should I do?

- Call a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.

You can file this report through the VAERS web site at www.vaers.hhs.gov, or by calling 1-800-822-7967

- Check with your doctor if your child recently had a blood transfusion or received any other blood product (such as immune globulin).
- In the late 1990s a different type of rotavirus was used. This vaccine was found to be associated with an uncommon type of bowel obstruction called "intussusception," was taken off the market.

The new rotavirus vaccine has been tested and has not been associated with intussusception. However, once a person has had intussusception, from any cause, they are at higher risk for getting it again. So as a precaution, it is suggested that if a child has had intussusception they should not get rotavirus vaccine.

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

In the rare event that you or your child has a serious reaction to a vaccine, a federal program has been created to help pay for the care of those who have been harmed.

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