



Your Baby's Immune System and Vaccines

**Protect your children. Get all their shots on time. The shots are free.
Call your local public health unit or health care provider to make an appointment.**

Check what **you** know.

Circle yes or no to the following sentences about vaccines and the immune system.

I know why it is important for my baby to get all shots on time.	Yes	No
I know why my child can safely get more than one shot at a time.	Yes	No
I know that getting my baby vaccinated is the best way to protect them from serious diseases.	Yes	No
I know how the immune system works.	Yes	No
I know how the shots work with the immune system.	Yes	No
If you have answered ' no ' to any of the above read on to learn more.		

What is the immune system and how does it work?

You may have heard about viruses and bacteria, often called germs. Some germs that enter your baby's body can make your baby very sick.

From birth, the immune system protects your baby from harmful germs. Your baby's immune system is made of organs and cells that work together and protect your baby.

Two important parts of the immune system are antibodies and memory cells. Antibodies help kill harmful germs. Memory cells help the immune system respond quickly to an infection and prevent disease.

How does a vaccine work?

Vaccines help a baby's immune system to make antibodies without your baby getting the disease.

Vaccines also allow your baby's immune system to make memory cells. After vaccines are given, memory cells will protect against harmful germs for a long time. For example, after your child gets

shots for measles, mumps and rubella, your child develops memory cells to protect them against these diseases long after vaccination.

Can my baby get more than one vaccine at a time?

Yes. Your baby's immune system is amazing. Every day from birth, a baby's body defends itself against thousands of germs. Germs are in the air, food, water, and on objects.

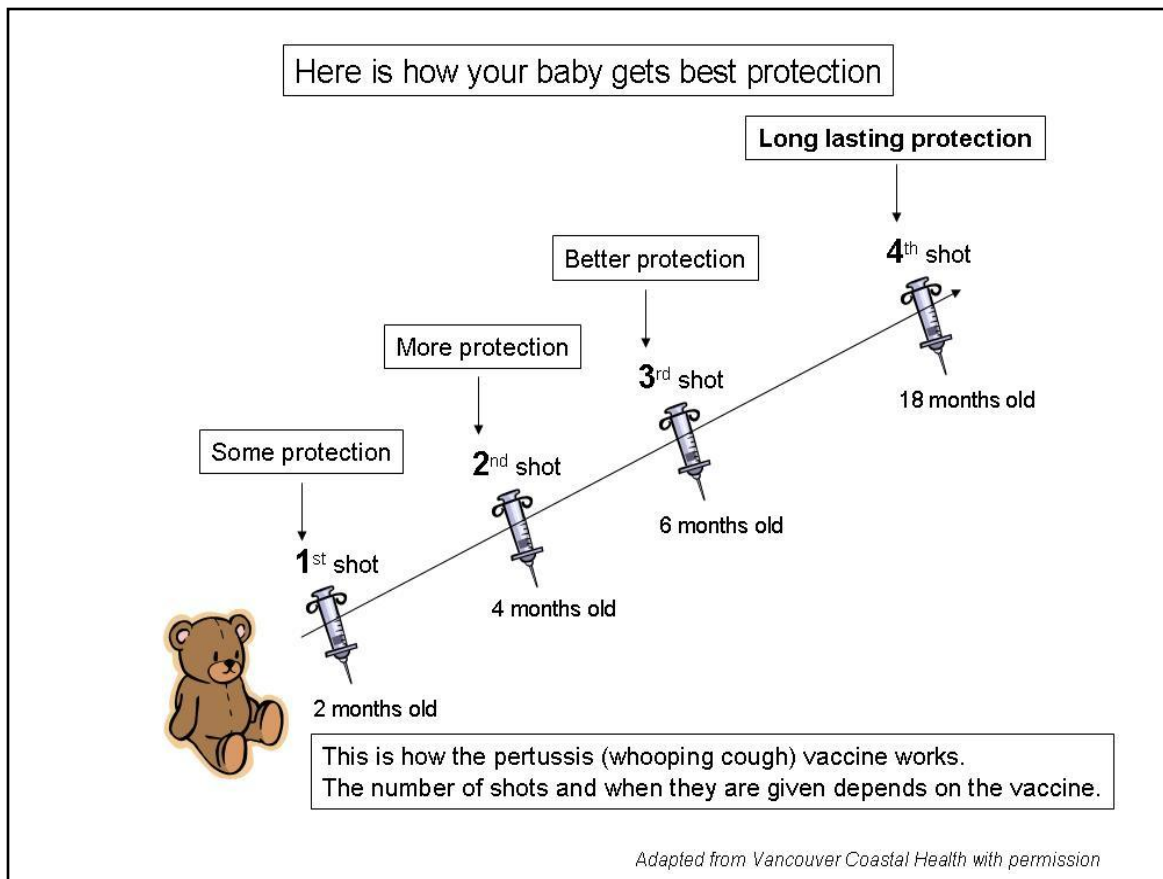
Getting more than one vaccine or shot at the same time does not wear out the immune system. Only a very small part of your baby's immune system is used for a short time even when your baby gets several shots.

Why is it important for my baby to get vaccines on time?

Vaccines work best when the shots are given on time. To protect your baby as soon as possible, your baby should get the shots starting at two months of age. Most vaccines need to be given as more than one dose or more than once. To ensure the best protection for your baby, the shots are given 1 or more months apart. For example, whooping cough can be a deadly disease for

babies. Babies need their first shot at two months of age to begin building protection against whooping cough. They will have full protection

in infancy after 3 shots. The 4th shot or dose given at 18 months of age is a booster shot to provide protection to last to adolescence.



For more information

Immunize BC: www.immunizebc.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada:
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/index-eng.php

Canadian Coalition for Immunization
Awareness & Promotion:
<http://immunize.ca/en/default.aspx>

More HealthLink BC Files on childhood immunization:

[#50b The Benefits of Vaccinating Your Child](#)

[#50c Childhood Vaccines are Safe](#)

[#50d Childhood Vaccines: What is in the Vaccines and Why](#)

[#50e A Better Immunization Experience for Your Child](#)

For more HealthLink BC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles/index.stm or your local public health unit.

Click on www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** for non-emergency health information and services in B.C.

For deaf and hearing-impaired assistance, call 7-1-1 in B.C.

Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.



ImmunizeBC



BC Centre for Disease Control
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