



The Benefits of Vaccinating Your Child

**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.**

Janet and Nathan's story

Janet thought 2½-year-old Nathan was too quiet during a car ride, so she looked in the rearview mirror to check on him. Nathan's eyes were rolling to the back of his head, the entire left side of his body was limp, and he was drooling. Janet rushed Nathan to the hospital. The doctors said Nathan had a stroke, likely from having chickenpox six months earlier. Nathan had not had his shot for chickenpox.

The chance of having a stroke within a year of having chickenpox is very small, but it can happen. A stroke results in brain injury and about 12 per cent of children who have strokes die. Due to his stroke, Nathan has problems learning, and he will have lifelong problems moving his body on the left side.

Nathan's injury could have been prevented if he had received the chickenpox vaccine.

Vaccines protect children from serious illness, disability, and death. Be sure your children get all their shots on time.

When you get your child vaccinated, you help protect others as well

If your child is immune to the disease, your child can not get sick and infect others. Your child's shots will help protect:

- ✓ Your family, friends and neighbours
- ✓ Young babies and seniors
- ✓ People with diseases such as cancer or other medical conditions

Vaccines help protect all of your child's body



Vaccines help prevent diseases that can cause lifelong damage. Meningococcal disease, for example, can cause brain damage, kidney damage, deafness, and loss of limbs. About 1 in 10 people who get the disease will die. Vaccines protect your child from harm caused by many diseases.

Vaccines help protect your child now and in the future

Your child is exposed to germs every day. Germs can spread easily in crowded places.

Check the list below and the places your child may visit:

- Daycare or preschool
- School, college or university
- Waiting room at a doctor's office
- Community centre, concert or event
- Summer camp
- A bus or an airplane
- Countries outside of Canada

Vaccines help protect your child now and in the future.


**Keep your child safe.
Get all their shots on time.**

By getting shots on time, your child can be protected from many diseases over a lifetime. Remember for best protection, it is important that all shots are given on time.

Vaccines are very safe

It is safer to get the vaccine than to get the disease. Here are things you should know:

- Serious side effects from vaccines are very rare.
- The most common side effects are soreness in the arm or leg where the shot is given and a low fever that may last for a few days. Up to half of children who get a vaccine or shot experience these side effects.
- Children with a fever may have a seizure, but this rarely happens. These seizures do not do any harm.
- A life-threatening allergic reaction after getting a shot is rare – only one in a million chance. If this happens, the doctor or nurse is prepared to treat this reaction.

Shots  Disease		
Diseases in Canada	Number of cases before shots existed*	Number of cases after shots existed*
Diphtheria	9,000	1
Measles	300,000	8
Polio	20,000	0
Rubella	69,000	9
Pertussis	25,000	2,718
	*People sick in 1 year	*People sick in 2004

Shots have kept thousands of people from getting diseases. This chart lists some of the diseases from which your child can be protected. See how many Canadians get sick now, compared to before vaccines existed. For more details, see the Canadian Immunization Guide at www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/index-eng.php.

What happens if my child does not get vaccinated?

Vaccines work very well when most parents choose to get them for their children. However, at times large groups of parents have chosen not to vaccinate their children. When this happens, the diseases come back quickly and lots of children get sick and some die. This has happened in Canada, England, Sweden, Japan and other countries. Get all your child’s shots and get them on time.

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:

[#50a Your Baby’s Immune System and Vaccines](#)

[#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.

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

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



BC Centre for Disease Control
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