



The Benefits of Immunizing Your Child

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

**Keep your child safe.
Get all vaccines on time.**

By getting all the vaccines on time, your child can be protected from many diseases over a lifetime.

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health measure.

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 6 months earlier. Nathan had not had the chickenpox vaccine.

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 can be fatal. 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. To view Nathan's story as told by his mother Janet visit ImmunizeBC
<http://immunizebc.ca/chickenpox>.

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

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

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

- your family, friends and neighbours;
- young babies;
- seniors; and
- people with diseases such as cancer or other medical conditions.

Vaccines help protect all parts of your child's body

Vaccines help prevent diseases that can cause lifelong damage. For example, meningococcal disease 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 for some of 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 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 vaccine is given, and a low fever that may last for a few days. Up to half of children who get a vaccine may experience these side effects.
- Children with a fever may have a seizure, but this rarely happens and these seizures do not do any harm. For more information on febrile seizures, also known as fever seizures, see [HealthLinkBC File #112 Febrile Seizures \(Fever Seizures\)](#).
- There is an extremely rare possibility, less than one in a million, of a life-threatening allergic reaction after getting a vaccine. If this happens, your health care provider is prepared to treat this reaction.

What happens if my child does not get immunized?

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 immunize 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

vaccines and get them on time.

For More Information

For more information on immunizations, visit ImmunizeBC www.immunizebc.ca.

For more information on childhood immunization, see:

- [HealthLinkBC File #50a Your Baby's Immune System and Vaccines](#)
- [HealthLinkBC File #50c Childhood Vaccines are Safe](#)
- [HealthLinkBC File #50d Childhood Vaccines: What is in the Vaccines and Why](#)
- [HealthLinkBC File #50e A Better Immunization Experience for Your Child](#)



ImmunizeBC



BC Centre for Disease Control
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority