IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

Rotavirus Vaccine

What is rotavirus?

- Rotavirus (RV) is an infection caused by a contagious virus. The virus can live on surfaces for weeks or months.
- RV is a common cause of gastroenteritis (inflammation of the lining of the stomach and intestines) in children. Almost all children who are not immunized against RV become infected by 5 years of age. Gastroenteritis is often most severe in children aged 3 to 24 months.
- RV causes vomiting, watery diarrhea and fever that can last for up to 7 days. These symptoms can lead to severe dehydration (not having enough fluids) in babies and young children.
- RV is spread through contact with the feces (poop) of an infected person or through contact with contaminated objects such as toys. It spreads easily among babies and young children, who can spread it to family members or caregivers. It is recommended that you wash your hands before and after caring for your baby, especially following feedings and diaper changes. It is very important that people with weakened immune systems wash their hands before and after caring for a baby.
- In Canada, about 36% of children with RV get so sick that they need to see a doctor, 15% need to visit an emergency department, and 7% are admitted to hospital.

What is the RV vaccine?

- The RV vaccine is an oral vaccine. It is a liquid that is given by mouth.
- Getting the RV vaccine is the best way to prevent rotavirus.
- The RV vaccine can be given at the same time as other childhood vaccines. The RV vaccine should be given first because it contains sucrose (sugar) and can help reduce pain from other vaccines given at the same time.
- The RV vaccine has a small amount of the weakened virus that is specially treated so that it won't make healthy people sick. This weakened virus may be found in feces (poop) for up to 10 days after getting the vaccine.
- The RV vaccine is 85% to 98% effective in preventing severe diarrhea caused by rotavirus.
- If your baby gets an incomplete dose of the vaccine (e.g., they spit it out or vomit it up), a second dose will not be given.
- The vaccine should be given under the supervision of a healthcare provider in a medical clinic or office.

Who should get the RV vaccine?

- The Nova Scotia Routine Immunization Schedules for Children, Youth & Adults recommends that children get one dose of the RV vaccine at 2, 4, and 6 months of age.
- The 3 doses of RV vaccine must be given before 8 months of age.
- RV vaccine can be given to:
  - » Babies who are breastfed or formula fed.
  - » Babies living in households with pregnant people.
  - » Healthy preterm babies based on actual date of birth.

Who should NOT get the RV vaccine?

- Babies younger than 6 weeks old.
- Babies who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose, or any part, of the RV vaccine or its container.
- Babies with a fever (temperature of 38.5°C/101.3°F or higher) or moderate to severe vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- Babies who may have immune system problems. Check with a healthcare provider before your baby gets the RV vaccine.
- Babies who have intussusception (a blockage in the intestine) or a disorder that may cause intussusception.

Please read other side.

www.nshealth.ca/immunizations

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IMMUNIZATION AFTERCARE

Rotavirus Vaccine

This vaccine is important in protecting your child from rotavirus. Your baby can eat and drink as usual, including breast milk, both before and after getting the vaccine.

People should stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization to monitor possible reaction. As with any vaccine there is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.

What are the possible side effects of the RV vaccine?

Common side effects can include:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Coughing or wheezing
- Ear infections

As fever may occur, make sure you have acetaminophen or ibuprofen at home. Follow the instructions that come with the product. Talk to your healthcare provider before using either of these medications as they are not recommended for people with certain medical conditions.

Call your healthcare provider if:

- A fever lasts longer than 24 hours.
- A fever is 38.5°C (101.3°F) or higher.
- A fever doesn't come down after acetaminophen or ibuprofen are taken.
- A seizure occurs.
- The following symptoms occur:
  - » Severe stomach pain, blood in their feces (poop), a swollen belly, vomiting or severe diarrhea.
- Other illness or symptoms occur.

Questions?

If you have any questions about rotavirus or the RV vaccine, please call your Public Health local Public Health office (see list of offices here: www.nshealth.ca/public-health) or your healthcare provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the following websites:

Nova Scotia Health Public Health
www.nshealth.ca/immunizations

Immunize Canada
immunize.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada
www.canada.ca/public-health

Canadian Paediatric Society
cps.ca

811
811.novascotia.ca

www.nshealth.ca/immunizations

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