

The Swedish vaccination program

DIRECTED SECTION FOR CERTAIN CHILDREN

All children in Sweden are entitled to vaccination against nine serious diseases through the child and school health services (see separate leaflet).

Some children are also offered vaccination against hepatitis B, tuberculosis, influenza and pneumococcus infection.

HEPATITIS B

Hepatitis B is one of several viruses that cause inflammation of the liver. The spreading occurs via blood and other body fluids. For some people the disease is not at all noticeable, while others can become very ill for several months. Most people recover, but for some the virus remains in the body and can much later cause complications such as damage to the liver or liver cancer. The risk is greater if you are infected by hepatitis B at a very early age.

Who should be vaccinated?

Vaccination is recommended to children who are exposed to parents, relatives or other persons with hepatitis B or children whose parents come from a country where hepatitis B is more common than in Sweden.

What protection does the vaccination give?

The vaccines are highly effective and almost all children that are vaccinated develop a protection. The protection is long lasting – probably lifelong.

Which vaccines are given against hepatitis B?

The vaccine is available as a separate vaccine. There are also combination vaccines for the vaccination of infants where the vaccine against hepatitis B is included.

When is the vaccination given?

The vaccination is usually given on three occasions, either together with other vaccines during the infant's first year (at 3, 5 and 12 months old) or according to a separate timetable.

What adverse effects may occur?

The vast majority of children have no or only minor adverse effects from vaccines against hepatitis B. Possible adverse effects are usually over within days.

COMMON (seen in at least 1 out of 100 vaccinated): redness, swelling and tenderness at the injection site.

UNUSUAL OR RARE: fever, itching, headache, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rashes, allergic reactions.

TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis is an infection caused by a bacterium. It usually attacks the lungs, but also other organs. Tuberculosis is usually spread through the air via coughing. In most cases the course of the disease is slow, with prolonged coughing, weight loss and fever. The disease can also be dormant in the body for many years and then break out. Tuberculosis in a dormant state is not contagious.

Who should be vaccinated?

Vaccination is recommended for healthy children who are exposed to parents, relatives or other persons with tuberculosis or children whose parents come from a country where tuberculosis is more common than in Sweden.

What protection does the vaccination give?

The vaccine provides good protection to young children against severe forms of tuberculosis. Protection in older children is under debate and highly variable.

Which vaccines are given against tuberculosis?

The vaccine is available as a separate vaccine.

When is the vaccination given?

The vaccine is usually given as a single dose from 6 months of age, but should be given earlier in case of high risk of infection.

What happens after the vaccination?

The vaccination involves the creation of a small skin infection. Two to four weeks after the vaccination a small hardened area forms at the injection site. The area turns red and increases in size and after a time a wound is formed from which pus can emerge. The wound must not be touched and will as a rule heal by itself after a few weeks. Avoid swimming in pools as long as the wound is open. Some children never get any wounds and only develop a hardened area that disappears after one or a few months.

What adverse effects may occur?

UNUSUAL OR RARE: an abnormally large wound that takes time to heal, fever, headache, allergic reactions.

INFLUENZA

Influenza is an infection of the respiratory tract caused by viruses. It usually spreads through the air when the patient coughs and sneezes. Each winter influenza affects our country and between two and fifteen percent usually become ill. In most cases influenza disappears by itself, but one quite common complication of the disease is pneumonia.

Who should be vaccinated?

As well as the elderly over 65 years of age, vaccination is recommended for adults and children with chronic heart or lung disease, unstable diabetes or severely reduced infection defense. Children with other diseases may also be eligible. The assessment is made by the child's doctor.

What protection does the vaccination give?

Since influenza viruses constantly change their composition, before each season a new vaccine must be produced that is effective against the viruses that are circulating at the time. For this reason it is necessary to get a vaccination every year in order to obtain the best protection possible.

Which vaccines are given against influenza?

There are many different influenza vaccines.

When is the vaccination given?

Children can be vaccinated from 6 months of age. The vaccine is given as one or two doses depending on the child's age.

What adverse effects may occur?

Influenza vaccines are made of virus cultured in chicken eggs. Those that are strongly allergic to eggs should not be vaccinated against influenza.

The vast majority of children have no or only minor adverse effects from vaccinations. Possible adverse effects are usually over within days.

COMMON (seen in at least 1 out of 100 vaccinated): redness, swelling and tenderness at the injection site, fever.

UNUSUAL OR RARE: allergic reactions.

PNEUMOCOCCUS INFECTION

Pneumococci are bacteria that can cause mild infections such as ear infections and sinusitis, but they can also cause serious and sometimes fatal diseases like blood poisoning and meningitis. There is also a risk of complications, such as various forms of brain damage.

Who should be vaccinated?

Public vaccination of infants against pneumococcus is introduced on January 1 2009. For children that are not yet vaccinated and who are at risk of becoming seriously ill by pneumococcus, the vaccination is recommended regardless of age. This applies to e.g. children with chronic heart, lung or kidney disease, congenital immune deficiency disease or children with cochlear implants in their ears. The assessment is made by the child's doctor.

What protection does the vaccination give?

The vaccines provide good protection against those pneumococcal types that are included in the vaccine.

Which vaccines are given against pneumococcus?

There are two different types of vaccine on the market. One is for children under 5 and the other for children over 2 years of age as well as for adults.

When is the vaccination given?

Vaccination of children within the risk categories takes place according to a separate timetable.

What adverse effects may occur?

The vast majority of children have no or only minor side effects from the vaccine against pneumococcus. Possible adverse effects are usually over within a few days.

COMMON (seen in at least 1 out of 100 vaccinated): redness, swelling and tenderness at the injection site, fever, diarrhea, vomiting.

UNUSUAL OR RARE: acute hypersensitivity reaction, itching, fever, febrile convulsions, nettle-rash, paleness and limpness.

IMPORTANT!

Before the vaccination – Tell us if your child is allergic or has reacted abnormally to previous vaccinations.

After the vaccination – Contact the child health centre or the school health service if you notice anything unusual about your child within the immediate period.

Do you want to know more?

Contact your child's doctor. You can also contact your child health centre or the school health service.