

Clinics may vary in the exact preparation and scheduling of immunizations, so talk to your doctor. Here's a typical immunization schedule for the first year.

Immunization Schedule

Over the years, a commonly accepted immunization schedule has evolved. Most doctors follow it, although there are some acceptable variations. The schedule is designed to give your child the maximum protection available as soon as possible. The reason some shots are not given earlier is that the child's own defense system hasn't matured enough to develop immunity. For example, a number of years ago, the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine were given to infants at twelve months. It was discovered that many of these infants didn't develop protection against these illnesses because their own defense systems weren't able to react to the vaccine correctly. The date was changed, and now the vaccine is much more effective.

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Immunization and Testing Schedule

- 2 months - DIP and TOPV
- 4 months - DIP and TOPV
- 6 months - DIP
- 9-12 months - TB test
- At least 15 months - MMR
- 18 months - DIP and TOPV
- 2 years - HiB and TB test
- 4-6 years - DIP and TOPV

DIP [diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine]: This immunization is given as a shot, usually in the thigh. Many children have no reaction to it. Some have

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When you receive a vaccine, it helps your body to create antibodies. Antibodies are the body's defenses that fight off any foreign substances (germs). Although your body can create antibodies on its own, most of the vaccine-preventable diseases cause severe illness and even death before enough antibodies are produced.

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swelling and redness at the injection site, as well as some fussiness.

TOPV [trivalent oral polio vaccine, also called the Sabin vaccine]: Your child is given a small amount of liquid to swallow. Side effects from this vaccine are very rare.

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MMR [measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine]: This vaccine is given as a shot. Your child needs only one shot to have lifelong protection from all three viruses.

TB Test [tuberculosis test]: Some doctors feel that routine tuberculosis testing is necessary and do it on all children. Other doctors feel that this testing is not needed and do it only when they believe the child is at risk of exposure to this disease.

HiB [hemophilus influenza type B vaccine]: This relatively new vaccine protects children against developing several types of infections including one type of meningitis [infection of the coverings of the brain and spinal cord]. This meningitis is more common in children two to six years old who are exposed to a number of other children, such as in day care centers, or who stay with babysitters who care for four or more children. Although this type of meningitis isn't common, if your two to six year old child is in day care or with a babysitter, you should discuss the HiB vaccine with your doctor.

Boosters: After your child has his childhood shots, he's all set unless he is going to be traveling in certain foreign countries or until he turns twelve. The tetanus shot provides protection for five to ten years.

Smallpox: The immunization used to be routine, but it has been discontinued because the risk from the vaccine itself is greater than the risk of getting smallpox. This disease has almost been wiped out worldwide.