

# Childhood Immunisations

Everyone in England should register with a GP. You can see them for free and you do not need proof of address. You can find details on how to register with a GP here: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery/>. If you are having any problems accessing healthcare dial 111.

You may have to pay for some treatment on the NHS, but routine vaccinations are free. Vaccinations are offered to newborn babies, young children, teenagers, pregnant women and older people. You can find out more about the vaccination schedule here [www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations). If you have missed any of the vaccines in the UK schedule, you may still need protection, even at an older age. Ask your GP or nurse to check if you need a catch-up dose.

## What are vaccines?

Vaccines are the safest way to protect you and your family from serious infections. In England, most vaccinations are offered free on the NHS. Vaccinations can protect you throughout your life. To protect children as early as possible many vaccines are offered to babies and toddlers before they start school. As vaccinations are so well accepted in England, they are not mandatory.

Vaccinations are usually given by practice nurses at your GP practice. Practice nurses are specially trained to give advice and offer vaccines. The nurse will carefully check the medical history but, as long as you or your child is well, an examination by a doctor is not needed. Older children are offered some vaccinations in school.

## Where to get vaccinations

Vaccinations for adults are normally offered at your GP practice or pharmacy. If you are unsure if you or your child has had all the recommended vaccinations in England, check with your GP practice. It is never too late to catch-up on the vaccinations recommended in England.

## Babies and Toddlers

Babies and toddlers need vaccinations to protect them from childhood infections including measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), rotavirus, diphtheria, whooping cough, meningitis, polio, tetanus, hepatitis B, TB and more.

## Pre-School

Pre-school children need booster vaccinations for some of the diseases listed above. This helps to protect children better and for longer. Primary school children are offered flu vaccination every year.

## Teenagers

Teenagers need another top up (booster) vaccination for some of these infections, including meningitis, to give longer lasting protection into adulthood. They are also offered the HPV vaccine which can prevent some cancers.

## Pregnancy

If you are planning on having a baby then you should check you have received all of your vaccinations – especially two doses of MMR – before you get pregnant.

## Older People

Older people need vaccinations to protect them against flu, pneumonia and shingles.

## Some people may need extra vaccines

Some people are more likely to suffer serious illness from infections and should be offered extra vaccinations to help protect them. This includes people living with a chronic illness that affects their major organs or their immune system:

- Hepatitis A - The vaccine is needed for people at high risk of hepatitis A, including those with liver disease and families where a case has been reported.
- Hepatitis B - Extra hepatitis B vaccine is also available for people with liver disease or those with a high chance of catching the infection (e.g. babies born to women with hepatitis B or people who have a partner or family member with the infection). Ask your GP practice if you or your baby should receive hepatitis B vaccination.
- Tuberculosis - The BCG vaccine is needed by children and adults living in areas with high rates of TB. People with close family members with TB also need the BCG vaccine.

## References

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immunisation-information-for-migrants>