

→ VACCINES



WHAT ARE VACCINES?

Vaccines are substances that stimulate the body's defences against virus or bacteria that cause specific infections. Exposing the body to the very small and safe amount of virus or bacteria in a vaccine teaches the body to recognise them. The body can then fight off these virus or bacteria if it encounters them in the future.



Vaccination is the **best way to prevent individuals and the community** from catching serious diseases that spread easily.

IS VACCINATION SAFE?

Yes, it's safe. Vaccines undergo strict controls before they can be used. All organisations involved in vaccine safety have concluded that the health benefits outweigh the risks.

DO VACCINES HAVE SIDE EFFECTS?

Vaccines, like any form of medication, can cause side effects. Most side effects are very minor, treatable and last only a couple of days. The most common ones are pain, inflammation or reddening at the injection site, irritability, tiredness, muscular pain or low-grade fever. You can apply a cool wet cloth to the painful area and you can treat fever with medication if you need to. Allergic reactions are very rare. When they do happen, they are usually caused by a specific component of the vaccine.

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HOW DO I KNOW WHICH VACCINES TO GET?

The vaccination schedule lists the types, dose and age at which each vaccination is given. Here, there is a specific schedule for people up to age 16 and another for adults.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Follow these recommendations before vaccination day:



Learn about vaccines. See official sources to find answers to your questions (websites, guides, healthcare professionals, etc.).



For babies, **breastfeed them** during the vaccination process if possible.



If appropriate, **tell the child clearly** what is going to happen to them.



Comfort and console the child if they need it.



Try to convey a sense of **calm and trust**.



Make sure you understand all the instructions for how to care for the child **after vaccination**.



Be sympathetic if they are scared.



Don't forget the vaccination record card.



The healthcare professional administering the vaccine will tell you **how to hold/support the child** based on their age.



Watch out for possible side effects.