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Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis and Polio vaccine for children before they start school



This leaflet tells you all about the DTaP/IPV or dTaP/IPV vaccines, also known as the preschool booster or "4 in 1" as they protect against four diseases, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough) and polio.



What does the vaccine protect against?

Diphtheria

Diphtheria is a serious disease that usually begins with a sore throat and can quickly cause breathing problems. It can damage the heart and nervous system and, in severe cases, can kill. Before diphtheria vaccine was introduced in the UK, there were up to 70,000 cases of diphtheria and up to 5,000 deaths a year. Diphtheria can be spread from person to person through close contact.

Tetanus

Tetanus is a disease affecting the nervous system which can cause muscle spasms, and breathing problems and can kill. It is caused when germs found in soil and manure get into the body through open cuts or burns. Tetanus cannot be passed from person to person.

Pertussis (whooping cough)

Whooping cough is a disease that can cause long bouts of coughing and choking, making it hard to breathe. Whooping cough can last for up to 10 weeks. Babies under one year of age are most at risk. The disease is very serious and can kill. Before the whooping cough vaccine was introduced, the average number of cases reported each year in the UK was 120,000, and 92 children died in the year before the vaccine was introduced. Children usually catch whooping cough by breathing in tiny droplets released into the air by other people's coughs and sneezes.

Polio

Polio is a virus that can attack the nervous system and can cause permanent paralysis of the muscles. If it affects the chest muscles or the brain, polio can kill. Before the polio vaccine was introduced, there were as many as 8,000 cases of polio in the UK in epidemic years. Polio is spread mainly by swallowing material which contains the virus.

What is the difference between DTaP/IPV and dTaP/IPV, and does the difference matter?

Diphtheria vaccines are produced in two strengths. The two strengths are abbreviated to 'D' for the high strength and 'd' for the low strength. There are two vaccines available for use in the preschool booster – one containing the high-strength diphtheria (DTaP/IPV) and the other containing low-strength diphtheria (dTaP/IPV). Both vaccines have been shown to provide good protection, so it doesn't matter which one your child has for their preschool booster.

When is the preschool booster vaccine offered?

The 4 in 1 vaccine is given to preschool children when they are three years and four months old. Children are routinely vaccinated against these diseases as babies. This booster increases their immunity even further.

It is important your child receives these vaccines before they start full time in school.

How will I know when my child's immunisations are due?

Children are sent an appointment to attend for their routine 4 in 1 vaccine at the appropriate age. Most surgeries and health centres run special immunisation clinics.

What happens at the appointment?

The nurse or doctor will explain about the immunisations and answer your questions. The injections are given into the upper arm.

Can the vaccine be given if unwell on the day of the appointment?

If your child has a minor illness without a fever, such as a cold, they should have their immunisations as normal. If your child is ill with a fever on the day the immunisation is due, delay the immunisations until recovered.

Are there any other reasons why the vaccine should not be given?

There are very few reasons why children cannot be immunised. This vaccine should not be given to children who have had a severe (life threatening) reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine or any ingredient in the vaccine.



If your child:

- has a bleeding disorder (for example haemophilia, in which the child's blood does not clot properly), or
- has had a fit not associated with fever.

Speak to your doctor, practice nurse or health visitor before your child has any immunisation.

What if I miss the appointment?

You should cancel an appointment in advance if you can't make it. If you do miss the appointment or have to delay the immunisation, make a new appointment as soon as possible. Immunisations can still be given, but your child will be without protection for longer.

Remember, it's important to catch up on most missed immunisations. If your child has missed an immunisation and is older than the recommended age, talk to your GP, practice nurse or health visitor.

Does the vaccine have any side effects?

Millions of doses of the vaccine have been used and it has a very good safety record. Children can sometimes get a sore arm where the injection was given. Some may develop a small lump where the needle was put in, this is normal and may last some weeks. It does not need any treatment.

They may also get a raised temperature (fever) over 37.5°C, seem unsettled and may not want to eat much. If your child has a raised temperature and appears unwell keep your child cool by:

- making sure they don't have too many layers of clothes or blankets on, and
- giving them plenty of cool drinks.

A dose of the correct strength paracetamol liquid may help reduce your child's fever. Read the instructions on the bottle very carefully. You may need to give another dose four to six hours later.

If you are worried about your child after the immunisation you should speak to your health visitor, doctor or practice nurse or call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 4647 or visit

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/

Members of the public can report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card scheme. This can be done by visiting

www.yellowcard.gov.uk

or by calling the Yellow Card hotline on **0808 100 3352** (available Monday to Friday, 10:00 – 14:00).

Where can I get more information?

You can find out more about the vaccines used including vaccine contents and potential side effects at

www.medicines.org.uk/emc/ by entering the name of the vaccine in the search box and looking at the patient information leaflet (PIL).

The vaccines currently used are Repevax® and Infanrix® IPV.



The routine immunisation schedule that shows you which immunisations are offered in Wales is available from

www.publichealthwales.org/routine-immunisation-schedule-wales

If you have any questions or want more information, talk to your doctor or nurse or call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 4647 or visit

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/



To order more copies of this leaflet email: hplibrary@wales.nhs.uk or telephone 08456 064050.

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