

Definitions

Acellular vaccine: the vaccine is made only from purified specific antigenic parts of a bacterium rather than the whole killed bacterium (e.g., acellular pertussis).

Adsorbed vaccine: a vaccine containing an adjuvant to assist in the retention of the antigen at the injection site and enhance the immune response by degree or duration.

Combination vaccine: vaccine that has been developed to protect against more than one type of infection (e.g., INFANRIX hexa®, QUADRACEL®).

Conjugate polysaccharide vaccine: vaccine in which the polysaccharide is chemically combined with a protein molecule to increase efficacy and immunogenicity (e.g., Hib, pneumococcal, and meningococcal conjugate vaccines).

Excipients: inactive ingredients that are necessary for production of a finished pharmaceutical formulation. Adjuvants, preservatives, and other additives are excipients, essential components of vaccines.

Live attenuated vaccine: the vaccine contains whole, living bacteria or viruses that induce immunity by actively replicating within the host. Attenuated means the vaccine strains are weakened so infection is usually inapparent or very mild.

Primary series: an initial series of vaccinations designed to give a primary antibody response. The series may be followed by an additional booster dose(s) to give a secondary immune response. (e.g., first 3 doses of DTaP-HB-IPV-Hib vaccine – INFANRIX hexa® at 2, 4, and 6 months followed by the booster dose at 18 months).

Pure polysaccharide vaccine: vaccine produced from the polysaccharide (sugar) coating of an encapsulated bacterium (e.g., pneumococcal and meningococcal polysaccharide vaccines).

Recombinant vaccine: vaccine produced by genetic engineering technology (e.g., hepatitis B vaccine is produced by the insertion of the segment of the viral gene that makes the surface protein of a hepatitis B virus into the gene of a yeast cell. The yeast cells are then instructed to make surface protein by the viral gene.).

Toxoid: a deactivated form of a bacterial toxin which has been chemically processed so that it is still immunogenic (e.g., tetanus toxoid). Once the toxin has been inactivated, it is called a toxoid.