

Combination vaccines and getting multiple vaccines at one visit



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

Many vaccines protect against more than one disease.



This guide answers common questions about combination vaccines and getting multiple vaccines at one visit.

How vaccines work

The immune system is the body's defense system that protects against disease. Vaccines teach the immune system how to respond to disease-causing germs (bacteria and viruses). Vaccines are made of dead or weakened germs or pieces of germs, called antigens. Vaccine antigens teach children's bodies to recognize germs and fight them to prevent disease.

What are combination vaccines

All combination vaccines in Canada have been approved by Health Canada. Combination vaccines protect against more than one disease in a single injection and are as safe and effective as single vaccines. The measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine is one example. Many of the combination vaccines are not available as separate vaccines.

Combination vaccines help by:

- Protecting against many diseases at one time
- Reducing the number of injections and number of appointments needed
- Reducing immunization injection pain and the chance of developing needle fears
- Limiting vaccine side effects like soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site

Why children need multiple vaccines at the same visit

Following the recommended BC immunization schedule and getting multiple vaccines at the same visit ensures babies and children are protected against serious vaccine-preventable diseases earlier. Research shows that getting multiple vaccines at the same visit is safe, and works just as well as vaccines given at separate visits.

Multiple vaccines at the same visit do not overwhelm or weaken a child's immune system — they strengthen it by building protection against disease. Every day, babies' and children's immune systems successfully fight off millions of antigens from their environment. Vaccines contain only a tiny fraction of the antigens babies encounter every day.

Getting combination vaccines when recommended ensures your child is protected against vaccine-preventable diseases as soon as possible.

To see BC's full immunization schedule, visit HealthLink BC by scanning the QR code or call 8-1-1. **Talk to your health care provider or public health nurse if you have any questions about vaccines for your child.**

