



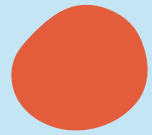
هيئة أبوظبي  
للطفولة المبكرة  
Abu Dhabi Early  
Childhood Authority



مركز أبوظبي  
للصحة العامة  
ABU DHABI PUBLIC  
HEALTH CENTRE

# Parents' Guide for Children Vaccination







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The parents vaccination guide is a practical resource designed and reviewed by health experts from Abu Dhabi Public Health Center and Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority to help parents make informed decisions about vaccinating their children. It provides current information on the advantages of vaccines, as well as practical advice for preparing for vaccination visits and addressing common concerns and questions.

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01

# The importance of vaccinating your children



The UAE coverage rate for childhood vaccination is more than

**96%**

(Source: World Bank Data - 2021)

## Why choose to vaccinate your child?

Choosing to vaccinate your child is a responsible decision that can help protect your child's health and prevent serious illnesses. It is also important for maintaining public health and preventing the spread of diseases.

## Why immunization is important?

**!** By getting your children vaccinated, you can ensure that they are protected from serious infectious disease, and you are helping to keep your community healthy as well

1

Vaccines protect children from serious and potentially life-threatening diseases, such as measles, polio, and meningitis.

2

When enough people in a community are immunized, it makes it difficult for diseases to spread. This helps protect not only your children, but also vulnerable individuals who cannot be vaccinated, such as people with weakened immune systems.

3

Vaccines are a cost-effective way to protect children from diseases.

4

Vaccines have been thoroughly tested and have been proven to be safe and effective.

5

Vaccines are recommended by healthcare professionals, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and UAE Health authorities as a safe and effective way to protect children from diseases.



## Is it safe?

Vaccines go through rigorous testing and different phases of clinical trials before they are approved for use.

Vaccines are safe and effective. Before licensing any vaccine, it is tested extensively for many years. Once a vaccine is in use, the concerned health authorities in the country are committed to assuring the safety of vaccine through strict monitoring systems.



## What is the purpose of immunization schedules in the UAE?

- 1** The timing for each dose of a vaccine is based on: what age a child's immune system provides optimal protection after vaccination, and the earliest possible time to provide protection balanced with the age the child is at highest risk for a disease.
- 2** The recommended schedule protects infants and children by providing protection early in life, before they come into contact with life-threatening diseases such as measles and meningitis. Children receive vaccinations early because they are susceptible to diseases at a young age
- 3** Young children have the highest risk of having a serious case of disease that could cause hospitalization or death. Delaying or spreading out vaccine doses leaves your child unprotected during the time when they need vaccine protection the most. For example, diseases such as Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) or pneumococcus almost always occur in the first 2 years of a baby's life. And some diseases, like hepatitis B and whooping cough (pertussis), are more serious when babies get them.
- 4** Childhood vaccines are generally given in multiple doses, and it is important to stick to the schedule as it is designed for the best protection. When children are not vaccinated on schedule, additional visits and shots may be required.

It is important to follow the UAE vaccination schedule and speak with a healthcare provider about which vaccines are due for your child.



## A chart showing vaccination schedule for children:

Vaccination	Birth	End of 2 months	End of 4 months	End of 6 months	End of 12 months	End of 18 months	grade 1	grade 8	grade 11
BCG	●								
Hep B	●								
Hexavalent		●	●	●					
PCV13		●	●	●					
RV1		●	●						
DTaP-Hib-IPV						●			
DTaP-IPV							●		
bOPV				●		●	●		
MMR					●	●			
Var					●		●		
HPV9								● Two doses for both genders.	
MCV4									●
Tdap									●

October 2023

For updated vaccination schedules, please refer to the Abu Dhabi Public Health Center or Abu Dhabi Department of Health website.

### Legend:

**BCG** (Bacillus Calmette Guerin Vaccine)

**bOPV** (Bivalent Oral Polio Vaccine)

**DTaP-Hib-IPV** (Diphtheria, Tetanus, acellular Pertussis, Haemophilus influenzae type b, and Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine)

**DTaP-IPV** (Diphtheria, Tetanus, acellular Pertussis, and Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine)

**HepB** (Hepatitis-B Vaccine)

**Hexavalent** (Diphtheria, Tetanus, acellular Pertussis, Haemophilus influenzae type b, Hepatitis B, and Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine)

**HPV9** ((Human Papillomavirus 9 valent Vaccine) for both genders

**MMR** (Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccine)

**MCV4** (Meningococcal ACYW135 Conjugated Vaccine)

**PCV13** (Pneumococcal Conjugate 13 valent Vaccine)

**RV1** (Rotavirus Monovalent Vaccine)

**Tdap** (Tetanus, reduced Diphtheria and acellular Pertussis Vaccine)

**Var** (Varicella Vaccine)

## Advice to parents on how to prepare your child before the vaccine

### When and how to start preparing your child?

**Several controlled studies show that well-prepared children suffer less anxiety and fear.**

Usually best told immediately before or during the visit, using simple language in a positive way.

The child should be well prepared a day or two before Vaccination. Explain that they have an appointment coming up and discuss the shot. Discuss why they need it, as children at this age do start to have more rational thinking. Talk through what will happen and practice breathing and relaxing their arm muscles at home.

### Tips for parents - communication with Children:

Start the conversation and make sure you are up to date. Ask and listen to your child. Chances are your child has already heard a lot. Remember, if you don't know the answer, talk to your doctor and don't guess.

Let your child know that you will be with them in the doctor's office. Or at school, a teacher and friends will be there with them. They are not alone.

Help children see vaccines as a good thing. Remind them that vaccines keep them healthy and are the best way to be able to return to the activities they miss.

Be fully engaged and take any fears your child may have. Post Pandemic and misinformation has caused a lot of worry and uncertainty for everyone. Accept and validate how your child feels.

Be honest with your child and set expectation. Explain that shots can pinch, but not for very long. Use a simple age-appropriate language. Choose descriptions like "poke" rather than "pain". Explain any potential side effects.

Engage other family members, especially older siblings, to support your child.

While communicating about vaccination, read positive stories and books about children receiving vaccines.





# Preparing for the Visit



Talk honestly with children about the vaccine and provide age-appropriate information.



Dress the child in clothes that are easy to remove / short sleeve.



Pack your child's favorite toy, book, or blanket to comfort him or her during vaccination.



Give yourself and your child plenty of time to prepare and try not to rush, in order to avoid feeling stressed and anxious.



For more than 1 child: Try to plan having one adult reassuring each child throughout the process if possible.



It's always a good idea to follow the doctor's visit with a positive experience such as going out for lunch. That will help in making such visits a positive experience.



It's always recommended to shower the children before the vaccine as they should avoid water contacting the vaccinated area.



It is not recommended to give your child antipyretics (such as paracetamol) before taking the vaccine. Some parents used to do this to prevent fever and decrease pain. However, recent studies have concluded that this practice may decrease the child's response to the vaccine. Antipyretics may be used only if temperature increases after receiving the vaccine.

# Advice to parents on how to support your child after the vaccine

## How do I support my child during the vaccination

During the vaccination, your child will receive an injection of the vaccine, which will be administered by a healthcare professional. Depending on the vaccine, it may be given in one or multiple doses.

The process is generally quick and relatively painless, with only mild discomfort or soreness at the injection site.

**Here are some things you can do to help your child during the vaccination:**



Every child is unique and will react differently to having their vaccination. Some will be excited and glad it's over. Some will feel proud of being so brave. Some don't even notice!

However they are feeling, it's important to continue being supportive and praising your child for playing their part in protecting themselves, their family and the community.

**We want to celebrate our children for choosing to get the vaccine**



**Relax.** Your child may react to your emotions. When you relax and stay positive, your child will be happier too.

**Cuddle.** Hold and talk to your child during the vaccination. Studies have found that children who are held while getting a needle cry less.

**Distract.** Your gentle, soothing voice or touch can help comfort your baby.

**Breastfeed.** If you are breastfeeding, try nursing your baby right before, during or after the needle. This will be comforting to your baby.



## How do I support my child after the vaccination

After receiving the vaccine your child's arm or thigh might feel a little sore. They might not like what's happened, or may feel overwhelmed, despite all the preparation you did as a family beforehand.

It is common for children to experience mild side effects such as pain, redness, or swelling at the injection site, as well as fever, tiredness, and headaches. These side effects usually go away on their own within a few days. It is also important to keep track of your child's health for any side effects that may occur.



**Never scold your child for crying, fidgeting, asking questions, or not being openly 'brave' when they go through the process. Admit and accept their feelings and never blame them or make fun of them for crying or complaining of pain.**

Smile, assure, distract and praise. Be positive and happy – children thrive on the emotions of others and will pick up on any stress in the room. Remind them that they are doing an incredible thing for themselves and the UAE.

### Encouragement

**Encouragement can help a child to manage any negative feelings around the vaccine. Your encouragement should include praise, love and maybe even a reward!**

A reward for doing so well shouldn't be too elaborate – a gift that's too big could make the vaccine seem like it is going to be worse than it really is. A reward could be as simple as going out for lunch.



Parents want to do whatever they can to keep their children healthy and safe. One of the best things you can do for your child's health is to get them vaccinated. As a parent, you may get upset or concerned when you watch your child get more than one vaccine injection during the vaccination appointment. However, all of those different vaccines help to protect your child from harmful infectious diseases that may lead to serious complication especially among young children.

### Why are multiple doses needed for each vaccine?

Getting every recommended dose of each vaccine provides your child with the best protection possible. Depending on the vaccine type, more than one dose is essential to build high immunity in preventing disease, enhance the immunity that may fade over time, or ensure that children are protected if they did not get enough immunity from a first dose, or protect against germs that change over time, like flu.

### Is it safe for my child to be vaccinated with many vaccines at once?

**Yes.** A child's immune system can handle more than one vaccine at a time. Combination vaccines protect children from more than one disease in a single shot. This reduces the number of shots and vaccination appointments your child would need.

### Can you get a disease from a vaccine?

**No.** The active ingredient used in vaccines may be a killed virus, a piece of a virus or bacteria, or in some cases, a weakened virus. Vaccines' active ingredients work by teaching your body's immune system how to recognize that disease. The actual amount of active ingredients in each vaccine is tiny. Your child encounters more germs and bacteria everyday by crawling around the house, eating and breathing.

A vaccine does not cause illness in healthy people because the virus or bacteria in the vaccine is either dead or very, very weak. Instead, it teaches your child's immune system how to create its own antibodies.

### Should I still get my child vaccinated if they are sick?

The healthcare provider will decide whether to vaccinate or not. However, usually children can get the vaccination if they have a minor illness, like a cold, mild fever, or diarrhea. If your child has a high fever or severe illness, you might need to consider rescheduling the appointment until they have recovered.



## What are the side effects of the vaccines?

The vaccine is like any other medicine, it may cause some side-effects. Some minor side-effects that may occur following a vaccination, includes redness or pain in the injected area, low grade fever, aches, loss of appetite, child not sleeping well, not playing as usual, etc... These side effects typically only last a few days and are treatable. The risk of a severe reaction is very rare. These are mild and short-lasting side effects, especially when compared to the complications that can be caused by vaccine-preventable diseases.

## Are vaccinations mandatory in the UAE?

**Yes**, some vaccinations are mandatory in the UAE, such as polio vaccination and the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccination for all children as part of the school admission requirements.



## Why are vaccines still needed if the diseases are not as common anymore?

1. Many diseases are not as common as they once were because of vaccines. However, the bacteria and viruses that cause them still exist and can still make children very sick.
2. **Disease outbreaks can still occur:** While vaccines have greatly reduced the incidence of certain diseases, outbreaks can still happen when vaccination rates drop.
3. **Protection against disease importation:** Even if a disease is not common in a certain area, it can still be brought in from other parts of the world where the disease is more prevalent, so vaccination is important to protect against this.
4. **Protection of vulnerable populations:** Some people, such as young children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems, are more at risk of severe illness and death from certain diseases. Vaccination is the best way to protect them.
5. **Cost-effective:** Vaccines are a cost-effective way to prevent disease, as they are less expensive than treating an illness once it occurs.
6. **Saving lives:** According to the World Health Organization, vaccines save an estimated 2-3 million lives every year.

It is important to talk to a healthcare provider for personalized vaccination recommendations and to ensure that your child is up to date with all of the recommended vaccines.



## Does the MMR vaccine cause autism?

**No!** The MMR vaccine does not cause autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Many research studies have been done to address this issue. There may be confusion because children with ASD are often diagnosed between 18 and 30 months of age—around the same time the MMR vaccine is given.

This has led some people to assume that the vaccine is the cause. Increasing evidence shows that even though the symptoms of ASD may not be visible until the second year after birth or later, ASD starts before a baby is born.

## How can I get vaccinated in the UAE?

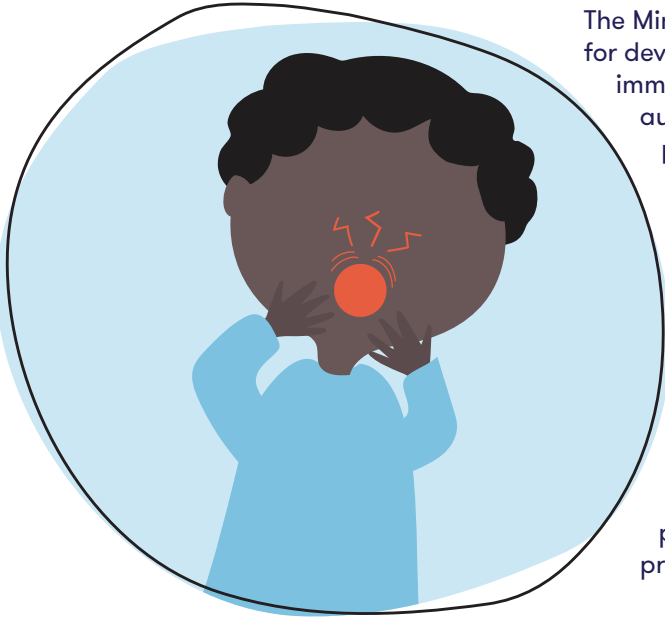
You can get vaccinated at public hospitals and clinics, private medical facilities, and vaccination centers in the UAE.

## Do I have to have my child vaccinated on time?

It is important to take your child to receive all the scheduled vaccines in order to ensure their protection. However, if you miss one appointment, you should ask for another appointment as soon as possible.



# Health Authorities Overview



The Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP) is responsible for developing national policies, guidelines, and protocols for immunization in the UAE. It also coordinates with the Health authorities in each emirate to ensure that the immunization programs are implemented effectively across the country.

The health authorities in each emirate are responsible for implementing the immunization programs at the local level. This includes establishing immunization clinics, conducting awareness campaigns, and monitoring immunization coverage rates.

In summary, the MOHAP and Health authorities play a vital role in ensuring that children in the UAE receive the necessary vaccinations to protect them from serious diseases. They work together to develop policies, implement programs, and monitor vaccine safety and effectiveness to promote the health and wellbeing of the population.

Here is the list of official Abu Dhabi authorities with their respective contact information:

- 1 Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP):**  
Visit the MOHAP website or call their Customer Happiness Center at 80011111 for more information.
- 2 Department of Health - Abu Dhabi:**  
Visit the Department of Health website or call the Department of Health Call Center at 024493333 for more information.
- 3 Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre:**  
Visit the AD Public Health Centre website or WhatsApp only on this number 0562312171 for more information.
- 4 Abu Dhabi Health Services Company (SEHA):**  
Visit the SEHA website or call their Customer Service Center at 80050 for more information.



It is important to contact the respective vaccination education material provider for any specific queries or further information.



Together, by following vaccination guidelines, we can protect not just ourselves, but our families, communities, and future generations from preventable diseases.





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