

Immunisation

How can you help?



A guide for school and children's centre staff

*There has been a drop in the number of children being immunised in parts of England, including London, over the past few years. Islington's immunisation uptake rate is below the recommended level necessary to prevent outbreaks, known as herd immunity (95% coverage). A fifth of our five year old children in Islington are **not** fully immunised. The low uptake of childhood immunisations has led to more children suffering from vaccine preventable diseases such as measles, mumps, whooping cough and polio. It also means that children who cannot be immunised for medical reasons are put at greater risk.*

Where can children be immunised?



Children can be immunised by their doctor, practice nurse or health visitor. All childhood immunisations are free.

On the back page of this leaflet is a list of the immunisations given to children under five years old and when they should have them.

What can you do?

As you talk to or meet parents everyday you have many opportunities to promote positive messages about immunisations and encourage parents to fully immunise their children.

You can also encourage parents to go to their GP or talk to their health visitor to find out more about immunisations.

On the opposite page are some key messages for parents which can help you have this conversation.

Key messages about immunisations for parents

- **Immunisations save lives.** Immunisation is the safest way to protect your child against serious diseases such as measles, mumps, whooping cough and polio.
- **The earlier the better.** It is important to make sure babies are protected as early as possible. Many of the diseases are more serious in young babies.
- **Vaccines are very safe.** Millions of doses have been given worldwide with very few serious side effects reported. It is common for children to have some redness, a rash or swelling where the needle goes in. This should only last about a day.
- **Measles is one of the most contagious diseases** and is a leading cause of death in countries where the vaccine is not easily available.
- **The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine does not cause autism.** It has probably prevented more than 1000 measles-related deaths in British children in the past 10–15 years.
- **If parents stop immunising their children these diseases will return.** A lot of the diseases vaccines prevent do not occur anymore in the UK. However, there has recently been a drop in the number of children being immunised which has caused outbreaks of some of these diseases.
- **When your child is immunised you are helping to protect the whole community.** When enough children are immunised, it is more difficult for these diseases to spread to those children who are not immunised. This is important because some children with medical conditions or allergies cannot have certain vaccines.
- **It is never too late to have your child immunised.** Even if your child has missed an immunisation and is older than the recommended ages.

What immunisations are given and when?

Please note the schedule below is correct as of 2012 but may change.

At what age to immunise	Diseases protected against	Vaccines given
8 weeks (two months)	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and Pneumococcal disease (PCV)	Two vaccines: DTaP/IPV/Hib PCV
12 weeks (three months)	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and Hib and Meningococcal C disease (Men C)	Two vaccines: DTaP/IPV/Hib Men C
16 weeks (four months)	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and Hib Men C and Pneumococcal disease	Three vaccines: DTaP/IPV/Hib Men C PCV
Between 12 and 13 months	Hib/Men C Pneumococcal disease and Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)	Three vaccines: Hib/Men C PCV MMR
Three years and four months or soon after (pre-school booster)	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio and Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)	Two vaccines: DTaP/IPV MMR

Note: The BCG vaccine is offered to all babies and recommended for those babies who are more likely to come into close and prolonged contact with someone with TB.

It is never too late to be immunised

Parents should check with their GP, practice nurse or health visitor for more advice.

Who to contact for support:

For more information about immunisations contact your health visiting/school nurse team.

Further leaflets (including information in foreign languages) are also available at:
<http://www.nhs.uk/planners/vaccinations/pages/vaccinesforkidshub.aspx>