



# Yukon School Immunization Program

**Grade 9**

February 2025

## Read before you proceed

- **Read** the information in this booklet carefully.
- **Complete, sign and return** the Immunization Consent Form that came with this booklet.
- Return the signed form even if you **DO NOT** want your child to receive any vaccines.

## Need more information?

- If you have questions about this booklet or need clarification, contact your local health centre.
- For Yukon's Immunization Schedule, visit [yukonimmunization.ca](http://yukonimmunization.ca) or contact your local health centre.
- For additional information on immunization, visit:
  - Yukon Immunize: [yukonimmunization.ca](http://yukonimmunization.ca)
  - Immunize Canada: [immunize.ca](http://immunize.ca)
  - Government of Canada: [canada.ca/en/public-health/topics/immunization-vaccines.html](http://canada.ca/en/public-health/topics/immunization-vaccines.html)

**Remember, when in doubt, ask!**

# The School Immunization Program

Each school year, community health nurses offer students vaccines to protect against serious diseases. The vaccines provided include:

- **Tetanus, Diphtheria and Acellular Pertussis (Tdap)**
- **Meningococcal Quadrivalent (Men-C, A, C, Y, W-135)**
- **Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)**—catch-up for two-dose series, if needed.

This booklet contains information on these vaccines and the diseases they prevent.

## When will my child get these vaccines?

Your child will receive these vaccines at an immunization clinic held at their school.

## What if my child is sick or not in school on the day of the immunization clinic?

If your child is absent or unwell on the day of the clinic, they can still receive their vaccines at your local health centre. Contact a community health nurse to make arrangements.

## What if my child is afraid of needles?

Community health nurses at school clinics are experienced in helping children who feel anxious about getting vaccinated.

- If your child has medical conditions, is extremely fearful, or has ever fainted or felt lightheaded during vaccinations, contact your local health centre.
- Nurses will work with you to create a plan to support your child.
- Do not give your child medication to relieve anxiety before vaccination.

## What if my child has already received some of these vaccines?

If your child has previously received some of these vaccines in another province or territory, provide a copy of their immunization records to your local health centre. The nurse will only administer the necessary vaccines based on your child's immunization history and only if you have checked the **"YES"** boxes.

## Can my child consent on their own?

Mature minors have the authority to give, refuse, or revoke consent for their own immunization. There is no legal age of consent for health care in the Yukon. The nurse will determine if the individual is capable of this decision based on professional guidelines in place.

## Will I receive a record of the vaccines my child receives?

Yes. After your child receives the vaccines you have consented to, they will be given a record of immunization. Keep this document with their other health records, as it is important to track all vaccinations.

# Helping your child get ready for immunizations

It's normal for children to feel nervous about getting vaccinated. Here are some ways you can help make the experience easier for them:

## Make sure they know what to expect

Tell them when the clinic will be and remind them at least one day before.

## Help them work out ways to take their mind off the actual shots

Distraction—focusing on something else—is a great way to cope with discomfort. Help your child come up with a list of things they can do before, during, and after the shot to take their mind off it.

For example, they could:

- Think of a favorite memory
- Talk with a friend
- Listen to music
- Read a book

## Be honest about to what to expect

- Never say, “It won’t hurt.” Instead, be truthful: “You might feel a small pinch and some pressure.”
- Stay calm and matter-of-fact. Your attitude helps set the tone.
- Avoid joking or teasing, such as saying they will get the “extra big” needle.
- Don’t apologize by saying, “I’m sorry you have to go through this.” Instead, reassure them that immunization is important for their health.

Information adapted from “Clinical Practice Guidelines for Pain Management during Childhood Immunizations” developed by **Help EliminatePain in Kids**.

# Information about the vaccines offered in the Grade 9 school immunization schedule

## 1. Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Acellular Pertussis Vaccine (Tdap)

### What are tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis?

- **Tetanus (lockjaw):** Tetanus occurs when bacteria enter cuts or wounds. These bacteria, often found in dirt, produce a toxin that causes painful muscle spasms. **Tetanus can be life-threatening but is preventable through immunization.**
- **Diphtheria:** Diphtheria is a serious infection of the nose and throat. It can cause difficulty breathing, skin infections, heart failure, or paralysis. **Diphtheria can be life-threatening but is preventable through immunization.**
- **Pertussis (whooping cough):** Pertussis is a bacterial infection that causes severe coughing spells, making it difficult to breathe. It can lead to pneumonia, convulsions, and, in some cases, be life-threatening. The illness typically lasts between six to 12 weeks. **Pertussis is preventable through immunization.**

### What is the Tdap vaccine?

Tdap is a three-in-one combination vaccine that protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. It is administered in a single injection.

### Why is this vaccine being offered to my child now?

This vaccine is being offered because the diseases it prevents are serious. The Yukon Immunization Schedule recommends that students receive this vaccine as part of their school immunization program.

Your child previously received four to five doses of the tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis vaccines as an infant and preschooler. This Tdap vaccine serves as a booster to those earlier immunizations.

## 2. Meningococcal Quadrivalent Conjugate Vaccine (Men-C, A, C, Y, W-135)

### What is meningococcal disease?

Most cases of invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) are caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* (meningococcus). This is a serious and life-threatening infection that includes:

- **Meningitis:** an infection of the lining that covers the brain.
- **Septicemia:** an infection of the blood.

Both infections can be life-threatening. Permanent complications may include brain damage, deafness, and loss of limbs.

Meningococcal infection spreads through:

- Respiratory contacts from coughing, sneezing, or close face-to-face contact.
- Saliva from kissing or sharing items like food, drinks, mouthguards, or water bottles.

Immunization is the best way to prevent meningococcal infections.

### What is the Meningococcal Quadrivalent Conjugate Vaccine?

The Meningococcal Quadrivalent Conjugate vaccine protects against illness caused by the Men-C, A, C, Y, and W-135 strains of meningococcus. It is given as a single injection.

This vaccine does not protect against other organisms that cause meningitis or septicemia.

### Why is this vaccine being offered to my child now?

This vaccine is being offered because the disease it prevents can be very serious. Since 2011, the Yukon Immunization Schedule has recommended that children receive the monovalent vaccine (Men C) at two months and 12 months of age. The meningococcal quadrivalent offered in Grade 9 protects against three additional strains not covered by the infant series.

### 3. Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) Vaccine

#### What are Measles, Mumps and Rubella?

Measles, mumps and rubella are viral infections that spread easily through coughing and sneezing.

#### Measles

- Also known as red measles or rubeola, measles causes fever, runny nose, very red eyes and a rash on the face and upper body.
- It can lead to complications such as ear infections and pneumonia.
- In rare but severe cases, measles can cause brain inflammation (encephalitis), which may result in seizures, deafness, or permanent brain damage.
- Measles can be life-threatening.

#### Mumps

- Symptoms may include fever, muscle aches, headache, and swelling of the salivary glands, particularly the parotid glands located at the sides of the cheeks.

#### Rubella

- Symptoms may include a rash, fever, joint pain, headache, discomfort, runny nose and irritated eyes.
- Swelling and tenderness may occur in the lymph nodes behind the ears and at the back of the neck.

#### What is the MMR vaccine?

The MMR vaccine is a combination of three vaccines given in a single injection. It protects against measles, mumps, and rubella.

It is a two-dose series, typically given:

- at one year of age; and
- between four and six years of age (before your child starts school).

#### Why is this vaccine being offered to my child now?

Completing the full two-dose series is essential for protection against all three diseases. Some individuals may not have completed the series, and the nurse will review your child's immunization history to determine if they need this vaccine.

Canada has experienced outbreaks of measles and mumps in recent years. These diseases can cause serious complications, and immunization is the best way to protect your child and the community.

## Caution

**Your child should NOT receive any of these vaccines if they have had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose.**

Before your child receives the vaccine, check with your health care provider if:

- They have problems with their immune system that makes them more vulnerable to infections.

### Possible Side Effects of the Vaccine

- Common reactions include redness, tenderness and swelling at the injection site. Some individuals may experience fever, headache, fatigue, or digestive issues. These side effects are usually mild and last one to two days.

### Managing side effects

- Apply a cold, damp compress to the injection site.
- If necessary, give a pain reliever such as acetaminophen.
- Contact your health care provider if symptoms are severe or last longer than 48 hours.

It is important to stay at the school for 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine.

Although extremely rare (less than 1 in a million people), severe allergic reactions can occur.

If you have any concerns about side effects, contact 811 or speak with your health care provider.



  
**Yukon**