Information for Parents/Guardians

GRADE 7
School Immunization Program

1. READ the information booklet about Grade 7 vaccines.

2. COMPLETE the consent form in this package.

3. RETURN the signed form to your child’s teacher. Please return the form even if you check no for all vaccines.

Adapted with permission from Elgin St. Thomas Public Health. November 2016
Introduction

Every school year, Huron County Health Unit goes out to schools in Huron County to offer free vaccines to prevent three serious diseases.

These vaccines are:

- Meningococcal Quadrivalent
- Hepatitis B
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

This booklet covers some important information about these vaccines to help you make an informed decision to get your child vaccinated.

If you have any questions about the information in this booklet, please call Huron County Health Unit at 519-482-3416 ext. 2025.

Information in this booklet is based on product monographs, public health sources, and other educational publications.
Frequently Asked Questions

When will my child get these vaccines?

Huron County Health Unit will go out to schools 3 times during the school year. Some vaccines are given more than once. This lets us spread the shots out over the year. Look for dates in your school’s newsletter.

What if my child misses the immunization day at school?

The health unit will catch your child up the next time we are at the school. If your child misses the last school clinic of the grade 7 year, your child can be caught up when we are at the school the following year.

Can I take my child to our usual healthcare provider to get these vaccines?

Most health care providers in Huron County do not carry these vaccines. It is easiest to get them through the health unit.

What if my child is afraid of needles?

The nurses who give vaccines at schools will work with your child to make this experience as positive as possible. Most students do well with their immunizations in school even if they are worried before. Students who are extremely anxious may do better with an appointment at the health unit instead of being immunized at school. The next page has some tips on helping your child get ready for clinic day.

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

If your child has already received these vaccines, write the dates they were given on the consent form. If you are not sure if your child has received any of these vaccines, call the health unit at 519-482-3416 ext. 2025. We will help you figure out if your child needs to be immunized.

Do I get a record of these immunizations?

Yes. After every vaccination, we will give your child a record of what was given that day. Keep these records with your child’s other health records.

Are these vaccines safe?

Yes. Vaccines are tested for many years before they ever get to your child. It often takes 10 or more years of studying and testing before a vaccine is approved. Vaccines continue to be tested after they start being used.
Helping Your Child Get Ready For Immunizations

A lot of people get nervous before getting a needle. Here are some things you can do to help your child get ready for immunization day at school:

**Tell your child when the clinic will be.**

It is usually best if children know when they will be getting a needle. The day before the clinic is a good time to remind your child that they are getting a needle.

**Talk about ways to deal with fear or anxiety.**

Distraction can be helpful. Your child may want to listen to some music or play a game on their phone when the needle is given.

Review some other helpful ways to deal with fear or anxiety - count to 10, look away from the needle, focus on breathing, think about something fun.

**Be honest about pain.**

Tell your child that it will hurt a bit. There may be a stinging feeling or some pressure where the vaccine goes in.

Remind your child that getting needles is quick – it will hurt a bit, but it won’t last very long.

**Help keep your child calm.**

Children know when you are worried or anxious. If you are calm about getting these needles, it will help your child be calm too.

Don’t joke about the needle (i.e. don’t tell your child they will need an “extra big” needle.)

Don’t apologize that the needles are being given or that your child “has to go through this.”

**Make sure your child is ready on clinic day.**

Make sure your child eats that morning.

Make sure your child wears a short sleeve shirt.
What about side effects?

Many children have no side effects after getting needles.

The most common side effects for these immunizations are pain, redness, and swelling where the needle was given.

Other side effects might be headache, feeling tired, fever, loss of appetite, and diarrhea.

Allergic reactions like a blotchy raised rash (hives), wheezing, or swelling of the face and mouth are extremely rare. If you notice any of these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.

What should I do if my child has side effects?

The nurses who gave your child’s immunizations will remain in the school for at least 15 minutes after the last needle is given. Most serious reactions happen soon after the needle is given.

Sometimes children feel unwell at home after getting immunizations. If your child is unwell:

- Use a cold compress on the area where the needle was given to reduce swelling and discomfort.
- If your child has a fever or pain, give acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil®) according to the directions on the bottle.
- If your child has a fever, make sure your child drinks lots of fluids like water and juice.
- If you have any concerns about your child’s reaction, contact your health care provider and/or a public health nurse on the Immunization Team.
What are the problems with Meningococcal Disease?

Many people carry meningococcal bacteria without knowing it. Usually the bacteria does not make them sick but they can infect other people.

People get sick when meningococcal bacteria get into the blood and other body fluids. These bacteria can cause:

- Infection of the fluid around the brain and spinal cord (meningitis).
- Infection of the blood (bacteremia).
- Widespread infection of the blood and organs (septicemia).

People who develop these problems can end up with permanent brain damage and deafness.

Meningococcal disease can cause severe illness resulting in death or disfigurement.

Meningococcal disease is spread through close contact and sharing saliva (i.e. kissing, coughing, sharing drinks). Young children and teens are at higher risk of disease because they like to share.

What is the benefit of getting the vaccine?

Most babies living in Ontario get one dose of meningococcal vaccine. This protects them against one type of the bacteria. The grade 7 vaccine is different. It protects against four of the main types of the bacteria. It protects 80% to 85% of vaccinated teens from getting infected. At this point, we don’t think a booster dose will be needed but it is still too early to tell for sure.

What is in the vaccine?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meningococcal vaccine Menactra® contents</th>
<th>Where else are they found?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed pieces of meningococcal bacteria</td>
<td>Meningococcal bacteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diphtheria toxoid</td>
<td>Other childhood vaccines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium chloride</td>
<td>Human body, table salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium phosphate</td>
<td>Laxatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What if I decide not to vaccinate?

The law (Immunization of School Pupils Act) says students require this shot. Parents who choose not to vaccinate have to complete an exemption form. This form must be notarized and brought to the health unit.

There are some children who cannot get a vaccine for medical reasons. A doctor needs to fill out a medical exemption for them. This form must be brought to the health unit.

Your child may be at risk of getting meningococcal disease or giving it to someone else if you decide not to vaccinate. Students who are not vaccinated or who do not have an exemption filed with public health can be suspended from school.

Looking for more information? Check out our website - huronhealthunit.ca
Getting meningococcal vaccine is safe.
Getting the disease is not.

Risk of Disease

About **200 cases** each year in Canada.

**Swelling of the Brain**
causing hearing loss, stroke, or seizures.

**Blood Infection**
causing shock and organ failure.

**Other Infections**
of the lungs, bones, heart, and skin.

**Death**
1 in 10 severe cases dies.

Risk of Vaccine

**Sore Arm**
Up to 6 in **10** people.

**Headache/tired**
Up to 6 in **10** people.

**Serious Adverse Event**
Rare
What are the problems with Hep B?

Hep B is short for Hepatitis B. The Hep B virus is spread through blood and body fluids. Some people who have Hep B don’t feel sick at all. People who do have signs of illness might have abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes (jaundice).

Hep B can cause inflammation, damage, or cancer of the liver. Each year in Ontario, Hep B causes about:

- 346 deaths
- 308 cancers
- 90 cases of inflamed or damaged liver

What is the benefit of getting the vaccine?

The Hep B vaccine protects 99% of children against Hep B. Two shots are needed in this age group to provide the best protection. People who get protected from the vaccine are considered protected for life.

What is in the vaccine?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hep B Vaccine Contents</th>
<th>Where else are they found?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed pieces of Hep B virus</td>
<td>Hep B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum</td>
<td>Vegetables, cereal, deodorant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium chloride*</td>
<td>Human body, table salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeast*</td>
<td>Human body, bread, bagels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium borate*</td>
<td>Water, soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formaldehyde*</td>
<td>Human body, fruits, fish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Found only in Recombivax HB*  

What if I decide not to vaccinate?

The Hep B vaccine is not required by law (Immunization of School Pupils Act). However, your child may be at risk of getting Hep B if you decide not to vaccinate.

Many college/university programs require students to have proof they are protected against Hepatitis B. The vaccine is free for students starting in grade 7. People who wait to get the vaccine until after they graduate may have to pay for it. People who wait until they are older to get the vaccine may need more doses for it to be effective.

Looking for more information? Check out our website - huronhealthunit.ca
Getting Hepatitis B vaccine is safe.
Getting the disease is not.

Risk of Disease

- **Hep B Infection**
  - Nearly 5 in 10 Canadians.

- **Illness (acute Hep B)**
  - About 1 in 10 infected children.

- **Chronic Hep B**
  - About 10 in 100 infected people over age 5.

- **Death**
  - Up to 2 in 100 with acute Hep B.
  - Up to 1 in 4 with chronic Hep B.

Risk of Vaccine

- **Sore Arm**
  - Up to 3 in 10 people.

- **Fever**
  - Up to 6 in 10 people.

- **Serious Adverse Event**
  - Rare
What are the problems with HPV?

HPV is short for Human Papillomavirus. The virus is spread by sexual skin to skin contact. There are many different types of the HPV virus – some are high risk and some are not. High risk types cause cancers (cervical, anal, genital, mouth and throat). They are the cause of most cervical cancers. Lower risk types cause most genital warts.

Sometimes people who have HPV have no symptoms and they spread it to people without knowing it. Each year in Ontario, HPV results in about:

- 254 deaths
- 1,090 cancers
- 14,666 cases of genital warts

What is the benefit of getting the vaccine?

The HPV vaccine protects against several types of the HPV virus that cause either cancer or genital warts. The vaccine provides close to full protection against these types of HPV. Two shots are needed in this age group to provide the best protection. Studies are being done to find out if a booster will be needed in the future.

What if I decide not to vaccinate?

The HPV vaccine is not required by law (Immunization of School Pupils Act). However, your child may be at risk of getting HPV if you decide not to vaccinate. The vaccine is free for students starting in grade 7. If students are offered the vaccine in grade 7 but don’t get it that year, they can still get it for free until they graduate high school. People who wait until they are older to get the vaccine usually need more doses for it to be effective.

Adverse Events in 7 Research Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SORE ARM</th>
<th>HEADACHE/ TIRED</th>
<th>OTHER SERIOUS EVENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaccine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0 TO 0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injected</td>
<td>83 TO 93%</td>
<td>50 TO 60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placebo</td>
<td>75 TO 87%</td>
<td>50 TO 60%</td>
<td>0 TO 0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rate of adverse events after vaccine or placebo is about the same. An example of a placebo is salt water.

What is in the vaccine?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HPV vaccine Gardasil® contents</th>
<th>Where else are they found?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed pieces of HPV proteins</td>
<td>HPV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeast</td>
<td>Human body, bread, bagels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium chloride</td>
<td>Human body, table salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum</td>
<td>Vegetables, cereal, deodorant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L-histidine</td>
<td>Human body, beans, fish, milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polysorbate 80</td>
<td>Ice cream, cottage cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium borate</td>
<td>Water, soil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking for more information?  Check out our website - huronhealthunit.ca
Getting the HPV vaccine is safe.
Getting the disease is not.

**Risk of Disease**

- **HPV Infection**
  - Up to 3 out of 4 sexually active people.
  - Most infected people have no symptoms but can infect others.

- **Genital Warts**
  - About 14,666 Ontarians each year.

- **Cancer**
  - About 1,090 Ontarians each year.

- **Death**
  - About 254 Ontarians each year.

**Risk of Vaccine**

- **Sore Arm**
  - Up to 9 in 10 people.

- **Headache/Tired**
  - Up to 6 in 10 people.

- **Serious Adverse Event**
  - Rare