

New Hexavalent Vaccine for BC Infants at 2, 4 and 6 months of age. Three less Injections!

Beginning February 1, 2009 all infants born on or after December 1, 2008 will receive a new hexavalent vaccine (INFANRIX hexa™) for their routine 2, 4 and 6 month shots.

What is INFANRIX hexa™?

A combination vaccine that protects against six diseases: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Hepatitis B, Polio, and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib). This vaccine has been approved for use in Canada since 2004 and is used in some European countries and in Australia.

When will INFANRIX hexa™ be administered?

INFANRIX hexa™ will replace the current pentavalent (Pediace®) and hepatitis B vaccines for the routine infant primary immunization series at 2, 4 and 6 months of age. Toddlers will continue to receive Pediace® for their 18 month booster.

Why are we switching to a hexavalent vaccine?

A hexavalent vaccine will continue to provide protection against the same deadly diseases but with one less injection at each visit. Research has shown that combination vaccines improve the rates of vaccination coverage.

What about the infants who were born before December 1, 2008?

All infants who have started their routine series with Pediace® and hepatitis B vaccine must complete their schedule with those vaccines. The pentavalent and hexavalent vaccines are not considered interchangeable in the primary series at this time.

Remember to reconstitute!

INFANRIX hexa™ needs to be reconstituted. It is supplied as a liquid in a single dose pre-filled syringe which is used to reconstitute the single dose vial containing the lyophilized Hib component of the vaccine.

Multiple Injections

For best and early protection give all the vaccines that the client is eligible for and give them on time. With the refinement of vaccine development and production over past decades, children today are exposed to far fewer antigens than in the past, even though they are immunized against more infections with more combination vaccines. Children are naturally exposed to multiple antigens on a routine basis. They respond well to these persistent exposures with no untoward effects on their immune system.

For more information go to www.immunizebc.ca

References:

National Advisory Committee on Immunization. Statement on the recommended use of pentavalent and hexavalent vaccines. *Canada Communicable Disease Report*. 1 February 2007; vol.33 (ACS – 1):1–16.

National Advisory Committee on Immunization. *Canadian Immunization Guide*. 6th ed. Ottawa, ON: Public Health Agency of Canada; 2002.

Andrea Derban, RN, BScN
Vaccine Educator
BC Centre for Disease Control



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