

**ONTARIO IS EXPANDING ITS FREE VACCINE PROGRAM.**

# The new **Rotavirus oral vaccine** for infants 6-24 weeks of age.



It's a safe and effective way to protect your baby from rotavirus, a disease that causes severe diarrhea and vomiting and can lead to serious complications.

Ask your health care provider for details.

**Immunization is the foundation for a healthy life.**

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# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ROTAVIRUS

## What is rotavirus?

Rotavirus is one of the leading causes of severe diarrhea in infants and children. It causes inflammation of the stomach and intestines, sometimes called gastroenteritis. Most young children are infected with it at least once by age five. In Ontario, children under 2 years of age suffer the most from rotavirus and are most likely to have severe complications that lead to hospitalization.

## What are the symptoms?

The symptoms include fever, vomiting, watery diarrhea, and abdominal or stomach pain. Rotavirus can lead to dehydration and may require a visit to the emergency department or hospital.

## How is rotavirus spread?

Rotavirus is spread easily among children and by direct contact with someone infected with the disease. Large amounts of rotavirus are present in the stool of an infected child. The rotavirus can be spread by contaminated hands, objects, food and water. It is common for children to come into contact with the virus in daycare centres and family homes. To prevent the spread of rotavirus disease, appropriate cleaning of contaminated objects and good hand hygiene is essential, especially after diaper changes.

## Why is the rotavirus vaccine important?

The free rotavirus vaccine is the best way to protect your child against all the risks of the disease. That's why it has been added to Ontario's recommended routine childhood immunization schedule for infants 6-24 weeks of age.

## Is the rotavirus vaccine safe?

Yes, the rotavirus vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine. Most children will have no side effects. Severe reactions are very rare.

## How is the rotavirus vaccine given?

**The rotavirus vaccine is an oral vaccine that is swallowed. It should not be injected.** It is recommended that your infant receive the first dose of the vaccine at the 2-month visit to your health care provider. The second dose can be given at the 4-month visit. All doses should be given after 6 weeks and by 24 weeks of age.

## Is it important to keep a record?

Yes. Make sure your child's personal immunization card is updated each time a vaccine is received. It's an important document so keep it in a safe place!