

## When should BCG not be given?

Sometimes we need to delay giving the vaccine.

We do this if your baby or child:

- is not well, especially if they have a temperature over 38°C,
- lives with someone who has or may have TB,
- is HIV positive or born to a HIV positive mother,
- is having any treatment such as chemotherapy,
- is taking immuno-suppressive drugs,
- has been given a live vaccine such as MMR in the past four weeks,
- has been in contact with someone who has infectious TB in the last five years.

**If your child needs another vaccine within three months after BCG, it should be given in their other arm.**

## For more information

Contact your HSE health centre or public health nurse

[www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)

[www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)



# BCG

## Parent Information Leaflet



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Order from your local health promotion department or [www.healthinfo.ie](http://www.healthinfo.ie)



## What is BCG?

BCG is a vaccine that protects against tuberculosis (TB). The vaccine contains a weakened form of the bacteria that causes TB. This stimulates the immune system to protect against TB.

## What is tuberculosis?

TB is a bacterial infection that can affect any part of the body, but usually the lungs. TB is spread by close contact with an infectious person. The main symptoms of TB include coughing up phlegm, coughing up blood, loss of weight, fever and heavy night sweats. About 400 people are diagnosed with TB in Ireland every year.

## Who should get vaccinated?

We recommend that newborn babies get the BCG vaccine. Children up to age 15 who have not had it already should also get it.

- Newborn babies may get the BCG in the maternity hospital, or you can bring your baby to your local HSE health centre;
- Older children may get BCG at the local HSE health centre or at school.



## What to expect after the vaccine?

3-6 weeks after the BCG vaccine, a small red pimple usually appears at the site of the injection. The pimple will remain for a number of weeks and there may be a slight discharge. A scab may form over the injection site. This is normal. The scab will heal and leave a small scar.

## Are there any side effects?

Allergic reactions to BCG vaccination are rare.

- A small number of people will get swollen glands under their arm.
- A small number of people will have a more severe reaction, such as deep ulcers or abscesses forming. If this happens to your child, bring them to your doctor or public health nurse.

## Some tips....

- Your child can bath or shower as normal and go swimming after vaccination. There is no need to protect the area with a plaster.
- If the pimple begins to ooze, cover it with a dry dressing and change it regularly.
- Do not use cream, oils or ointments on the pimple even if there is a discharge.
- Do not wear tight clothing around the area.

**If you have any concerns, contact your local HSE health centre or public health nurse for advice.**

## What is a Mantoux test?

The Mantoux test is a skin test that shows if your body has been exposed to TB. We recommend it for children aged six years and older. Children under age six who are at a high risk of TB should also get it. The test involves a small injection into the arm. The results are read 2 - 3 days later. If the results are negative, the BCG vaccine can be given.