

Rotavirus Vaccine

Rotavirus is a highly contagious virus that causes severe diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, and abdominal pain, primarily affecting infants and young children. It is one of the leading causes of severe gastroenteritis in children worldwide, leading to millions of hospital visits each year. Fortunately, the **rotavirus vaccine** is an effective way to prevent this serious illness and protect your child's health.

What is Rotavirus?

Rotavirus infects the intestines, causing inflammation and leading to symptoms such as:

- **Watery diarrhoea**
- **Vomiting**
- **Fever**
- **Dehydration**

Dehydration is a significant concern with rotavirus infections because it can lead to severe health complications, especially in young children. Symptoms of dehydration include dry mouth, decreased urine output, dizziness, and lethargy. In some cases, hospitalization may be required to treat dehydration.

How Does the Rotavirus Vaccine Work?

The rotavirus vaccine is an oral vaccine, meaning it is given by mouth, usually in the form of a liquid. The vaccine works by introducing a weakened form of the virus into your child's body. This helps the immune system recognize and fight off the real virus if your child is exposed in the future.

Vaccination Schedule

In South Africa, the rotavirus vaccine is included in the **Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI)** and is given in two doses:

- The first dose is administered at **6 weeks of age**.
- The second dose is given at **14 weeks of age**.

It's essential to stick to this vaccination schedule to ensure your child receives maximum protection against rotavirus.

Brought to you by **Cipla**

**Cipla supports health literacy through sponsorship. Content is independently created and managed by Medinformer.*

Why is the Rotavirus Vaccine Important?

1. **Prevents Severe Illness:** The vaccine significantly reduces the risk of severe rotavirus disease, which can lead to hospitalization and complications like dehydration.
2. **Reduces Hospital Visits:** By preventing rotavirus infections, the vaccine helps reduce the number of children requiring medical attention, easing the burden on healthcare facilities.
3. **Promotes Community Health:** High vaccination coverage contributes to herd immunity, protecting not just vaccinated children but also those who are unable to receive the vaccine, such as infants or those with specific health conditions.

Safety of the Rotavirus Vaccine

The rotavirus vaccine is safe and has been widely studied. Most children experience only mild side effects, if any, such as:

- **Mild irritability**
- **Low-grade fever**
- **Diarrhoea** (in rare cases)

Serious side effects are extremely rare, and the benefits of vaccination far outweigh the risks.

Common Misconceptions

Some parents may be concerned about the safety of vaccines or worry about potential side effects. It's essential to talk to your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the rotavirus vaccine. They can provide you with accurate information and help you make an informed decision.

References:

1. [South African Department of Health](#)

