

# Rotavirus and the Vaccine (Drops) to Prevent It

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**The best way to protect against rotavirus is by getting the rotavirus vaccine. Doctors recommend that all children get the vaccine.**

## Why should my child get rotavirus vaccine?

The rotavirus vaccine:

- Protects your child from rotavirus, a potentially serious disease
- Prevents your child from developing diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain from rotavirus
- Keeps your child from missing school or childcare (and keeps you from missing work to care for your sick child)

## Is rotavirus vaccine safe?

The rotavirus vaccine is very safe, and it is effective at preventing rotavirus disease. RotaTeq® and Rotarix® were each tested with more than 70,000 volunteers. Millions of babies in the United States have gotten the vaccine safely during routine use.

## What are the side effects?

Side effects are rare, usually mild, and may include fussiness, fever, and diarrhea.

Some studies have shown a small rise in cases of intussusception within a week after the first or second dose of rotavirus vaccine. Intussusception is a type of bowel blockage that is treated in a hospital. Some babies might need surgery. Studies estimate a risk ranging from about 1 intussusception case in every 20,000 infants to 1 intussusception case in every 100,000 infants after vaccination.

There are 2 brands of rotavirus vaccine: RotaTeq and Rotarix. They are both given by mouth, not by a shot.

## What is rotavirus?

Rotavirus is a virus that causes severe diarrhea and vomiting. It affects mostly babies and young children. Diarrhea and vomiting can lead to serious dehydration (loss of body fluid). If dehydration is not treated, it can be deadly.

## What are the symptoms of rotavirus?

Rotavirus causes the following:

- Fever
- Watery diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain

Diarrhea and vomiting may last for 3 to 8 days. Children may stop eating and drinking while they are sick.



Doctors recommend that your child get two or three doses of the vaccine (depending on the brand of vaccine) for best protection. Babies should get the first dose at 2 months of age. For both vaccine brands, babies get a second dose at 4 months. If he's getting RotaTeq, he'll need a third dose at 6 months.

## Is it serious?

Rotavirus can be very harmful. Diarrhea, vomiting, and fever can all cause a loss of body fluids. This leads to dehydration, which can be very dangerous, especially for babies and young children. Some children need an IV (needle in their vein) in the hospital to replace lost fluids.

## How does rotavirus spread?

Rotavirus spreads easily. The virus is in the stool of people who are infected with the virus. It is spread by hands, diapers, or objects like toys, changing tables, or doorknobs that have a small amount of the stool on them. The disease commonly spreads in families, hospitals, and childcare centers.

Rotavirus is a tough virus. It can live on objects for several days unless it is killed by a disinfectant (cleaner that kills germs). But, even with hand washing and cleaning with a disinfectant it is very hard to prevent rotavirus.

## Where can I learn more about the rotavirus vaccine and my child?

To learn more about the rotavirus vaccine, talk to your child's doctor, call 1-800-CDC-INFO or visit [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommend all children receive their vaccines according to the recommended schedule.