



**Free chickenpox vaccine and new vaccine schedule now available for babies born on or after 1 October 2024**

**National Immunisation Office  
2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024.**



# Free chickenpox vaccine now available for babies born on or after 1 October 2024

## Background

The HSE has announced a series of changes to the primary childhood immunisation schedule for all babies born on or after 1 October 2024. This includes the introduction of the chickenpox (varicella) vaccine.

Your child's date of birth will decide which schedule they are on.

- If they are born on or before *30th September 2024*, then the existing childhood schedule will apply even if they need to catch-up. There is no chickenpox vaccine available in this schedule.
- If they are born on or after *1<sup>st</sup> October* they will be offered a new childhood schedule, the chickenpox vaccine is available on this schedule and is recommended when babies are 12 months of age

There are no changes to the number of GP visits required. They remain at 2, 4, 6, 12 and 13 months.

For babies on the new schedule, NIAC recommend a second varicella vaccine, to be given when children are aged 4-5 years in Junior Infants as a combined MMR and varicella vaccine, MMRV.

This is part of the schools' immunisation programme. This programme will be implemented in 2029/2030.

# Free chickenpox vaccine now available for babies born on or after 1 October 2024

## Key messages

### Primary

1. If your baby is born on and after the 1st October you will be offered a new vaccine schedule.
2. If your baby is born on and after the 1st October you will be offered the Varicella (Chickenpox) vaccine as part of the new baby vaccine schedule when they are 12 months old.

### Secondary

1. Childhood diseases are preventable through vaccination.
2. Vaccination is safe, effective, and essential for community immunity.
3. Protect your baby and others by getting vaccinated.
4. Timely vaccination ensures a healthier future for everyone.
5. Talk to you Public Health Nurse or GP for more information.
6. Visit [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie), [www.mychild.ie](http://www.mychild.ie) and [hse.ie/chickenpox-vaccine](http://hse.ie/chickenpox-vaccine)



# Childhood Immunisation Schedules

## Babies born before 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Age	Vaccination
2 months	<b>Visit 1</b> 6 in 1+PCV+MenB+Rotavirus 3 Injections+Oral Drops
4 months	<b>Visit 2</b> 6 in 1+MenB+Rotavirus 2 Injections+Oral Drops
6 months	<b>Visit 3</b> 6 in 1+PCV+MenC 3 Injections
No Rotavirus vaccine on or after 8 months 0 days	
12 months	<b>Visit 4</b> MMR+MenB 2 Injections
13 months	<b>Visit 5</b> Hib/MenC+PCV 2 Injections

## Babies born on or after 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024

2 months	<b>Visit 1</b> 6 in 1 + PCV + MenB + Rotavirus 3 Injections + Oral Drops
4 months	<b>Visit 2</b> 6 in 1 + MenB + Rotavirus 2 Injections + Oral Drops
6 months	<b>Visit 3</b> 6 in 1 + PCV 2 Injections
No Rotavirus vaccine on or after 8 months 0 days	
12 months	<b>Visit 4</b> MMR + MenB + Chickenpox 3 Injections
13 months	<b>Visit 5</b> 6 in 1 + MenC + PCV 3 Injections

Following the correct schedule and making sure your baby completes the recommended vaccines ensures they have important protection from many potentially serious and preventable diseases.



# Protect your babies and children: Get them vaccinated on time.

***Dr Chantal Migone, Consultant in Public Health Medicine the HSE National Immunisation Office said,***

*“We are delighted that the chickenpox vaccine is now part of the routine childhood immunisation schedule as has been recommended by the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC). All babies born from 1 October 2024 will be offered the new childhood immunisation schedule, which includes chickenpox vaccine at 12 months of age”.*

*“Many parents might consider chickenpox to be a mild illness, but for some babies chickenpox and its complications can be very serious, resulting in hospitalisation for 170 cases last year, and in rare cases even death. Adding the chickenpox vaccine to the routine immunisation schedule will ensure the best protection for babies, and far fewer serious cases of the disease.”*

*“The immunisation schedule remains with five separate GP visits, at 2, 4, 6, 12 and 13 months. Following the schedule and making sure your baby completes the recommended vaccines on time every time ensures they have important protection from many potentially serious and preventable diseases.”*



# Protect your babies and children: Get them vaccinated on time

## Campaign messages

### Sample social media message #1



## Your child's free vaccines protect them against infectious diseases, every single day.

New vaccine schedule for babies born on or after 1 October, 2024

For more information visit [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)



The baby vaccine schedule in Ireland is changing. Babies born on or after 1 October will be offered varicella (chickenpox) as part of this new vaccine schedule. Childhood vaccines are free and the safest way to protect your baby against serious illness.

#ChildhoodVaccination #VaccinesWork #VaccinesSaveLives  
#immunisation #vaccines #vaccination #babies #children #child  
#ChildHealth

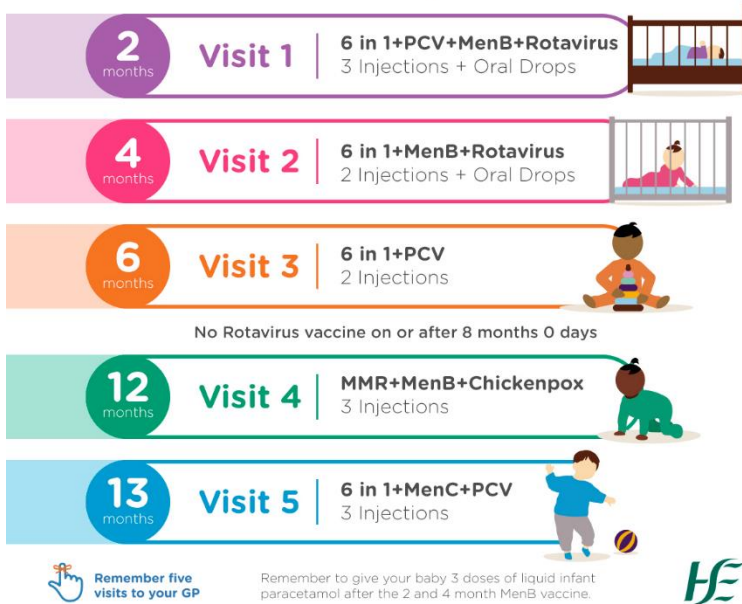
Find out more at [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)

# Protect your babies and children: Get them vaccinated on time

## Sample social media message #2

### Your Child's Vaccines

Babies born on or after 1 October, 2024



The baby vaccine schedule in Ireland is changing. Babies born on or after 1 October will be offered varicella (chickenpox) as part of this new vaccine schedule. Childhood vaccines are free and the safest way to protect your baby against serious illness.

#ChildhoodVaccination #VaccinesWork #VaccinesSaveLives  
#immunisation #vaccines #vaccination #babies #children #child  
#ChildHealth

Find out more at [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)

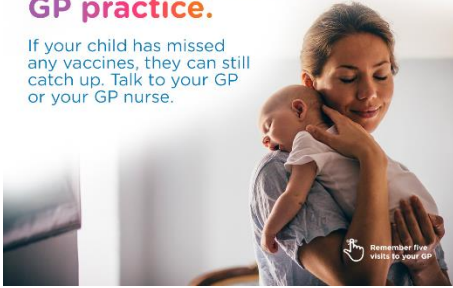
# Protect your babies and children: Get them vaccinated on time

## Sample social media message #3



**In Ireland, childhood vaccines are free for all children through their GP practice.**

If your child has missed any vaccines, they can still catch up. Talk to your GP or your GP nurse.



**Vaccines** are the best and safest way to protect our children from serious infections. It protects your child against 14 infectious diseases.



#DidYouKnow childhood vaccines are free for all children through their GP practice in Ireland?

Don't worry if your child has missed any vaccines, they can still catch up. Take the first step to protect your baby's health today.

#ChildhoodVaccination #VaccinesWork #VaccinesSaveLives  
#immunisation #vaccines #vaccination #babies #children #child  
#ChildHealth

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



# Protect your babies and children: Get them vaccinated on time

Sample social media message #4



## Protect your child with vaccines



Protect your baby's health by getting them their free vaccinations. Vaccines are the single best way to protect your baby from 14 infectious diseases.

#ChildhoodVaccination

Find out more at [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)



# Protect your babies and children: Get them vaccinated on time.

## Chickenpox: What is national the data telling us?

Only hospitalised cases of chickenpox are [notified to HPSC](#).

In 2023, there were 170 cases of hospitalised chickenpox notified in Ireland, the highest number notified in recent years.

- 2022 – 75 cases
  - 2021 – 23 cases
  - 2020 – 21 cases
  - 2019 – 93 cases
  - 2018 - 99 cases
- 
- Cases of hospitalised chickenpox are highest in the 1-9 year old age group
  - Chickenpox infection can result in serious illness.
  - Since 2018, there have been four cases of meningitis and 10 cases of encephalitis-related chickenpox reported
  - Chickenpox has also been identified as a risk factor for invasive Group A Streptococcus (iGAS) infection which can lead to sepsis and can be fatal
  - During the increase in iGAS cases in 2023, of 532 iGAS cases reported:
    - 29 were also reported as being hospitalised Chickenpox cases
    - Chickenpox was listed as a risk factor in a further 51 iGAS cases.

## What about regional data?

Regional data can be found at: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/vaccinepreventable/vaccination/immunisationuptakestatistics/immunisationuptakestatisticsat12and24monthsofage>

# Support the Campaign

You will find Campaign messages on HSE social media platforms.

You can support the Campaign by sharing our messages as they appear on Facebook and Instagram .

Tag the HSE social media accounts and using hashtags #Chickenpoxvaccine #ChildhoodVaccination #VaccinesWork #VaccinesSaveLives #immunisation #vaccines #vaccination #babies #children #child #ChildHealth

You can find the messages here:



<https://www.facebook.com/HSElive/>



<https://www.instagram.com/irishhealthservice/>



<https://twitter.com/HSELive> #ChildhoodVaccination #Chickenpox

Website: [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie), [www.mychild.ie](http://www.mychild.ie) and [hse.ie/chickenpox-vaccine](http://hse.ie/chickenpox-vaccine)

You can also support by sharing this Campaign Pack with others who may be interested.

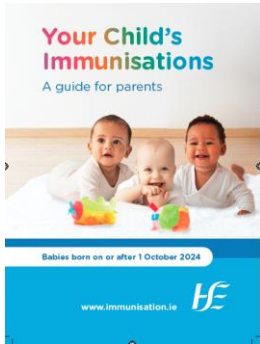
# Free resources

You can **download** the campaign resources from [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)  
Printed resources will be available to order from mid October.

## 1. NEW Your Childs Immunisation Booklet English

Comprehensive booklet about your Childs' immunisations from birth to 13 months of age. For children born on or after 1st of October 2024

English order code: HNI01688.

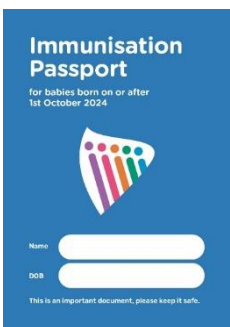


## 2. Immunisation Schedule: A3 Poster [English and Irish combined].Order code: HNI00846



## 3. Immunisation Passport

English order code: HNI01679. Irish order code: HNI01686



# Free resources

## 4. After Immunisation Information [Tearpad]

English order code: HNI01680. Irish order code: HNI01687

**After** Date of Next Appointment

**Immunisation Information**

Children born on or after 1st October 2024 are offered the vaccines in the table below.

<b>2 months</b>	<b>Visit 1</b>	6 in 1+PCV+MenB+Rotavirus 3 Injections+Oral Drops
<b>4 months</b>	<b>Visit 2</b>	6 in 1+MenB+Rotavirus 2 Injections+Oral Drops
<b>6 months</b>	<b>Visit 3</b>	6 in 1+PCV 2 Injections
No Rotavirus vaccine on or after 8 months 0 days		
<b>12 months</b>	<b>Visit 4</b>	MMR+MenB+Chickenpox 3 Injections
<b>13 months</b>	<b>Visit 5</b>	6 in 1+MenC+PCV 3 Injections

Your child needs five GP (doctor) visits.  
If you are unable to make the appointment, the GP will call to collect the vaccines.  
Vaccines are free of charge for you. However, you may be charged for other services.

Remember you will need paracetamol for your baby's 2 and 4 month vaccinations.

**HE**  
www.immunisation.ie

## 5. Child vaccine Infographic: English

### Your Child's Vaccines

Babies born on or after 1 October, 2024

Which vaccines will my child receive?

<b>Visit 1 - 2 months</b> 6 in 1+PCV+MenB+Rotavirus 3 Injections+Oral Drops	<b>Visit 2 - 4 months</b> 6 in 1+MenB+Rotavirus 2 Injections+Oral Drops	<b>Visit 3 - 6 months</b> 6 in 1+PCV 2 Injections No Rotavirus vaccine on or after 8 months 0 days
<b>Visit 4 - 12 months</b> MMR+MenB+Chickenpox 3 Injections	<b>Visit 5 - 13 months</b> 6 in 1+MenC+PCV 3 Injections	<b>If you move to Ireland</b> If your child has come to Ireland from another country, they should get the vaccines that are recommended in Ireland. This protects them from diseases that are more common in Ireland. The GP or General Practice Nurse will tell you which vaccines your child may need.

This resource is available to **download** in the following languages:

Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Georgian, Pashto, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Ukrainian and Urdu.

Available to download from:

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

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

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

# Campaign: translated information



You can find the new Immunisation schedule in five community languages:  
Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Arabic and Chinese



## Welcome to HealthConnect.

Here you will find all the details you need to connect with the health services in your area.

FIND A SERVICE

LEARN MORE

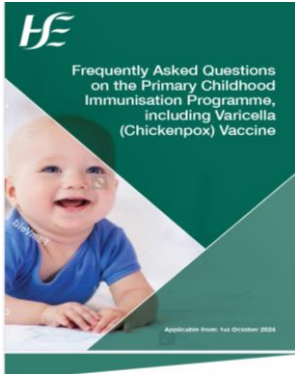
1. Click into <https://healthconnect.ie/>
2. Go to 'find a service'
3. Click the 'immunisation' bucket
4. Information can be found under the heading 'Vaccines for your child'



Immunisations

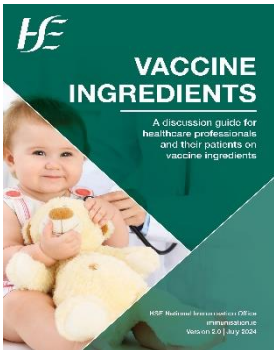
LEARN MORE

# Resources for Health Care Professionals



FAQs for healthcare professionals: [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)

Vaccine Ingredients: A discussion guide for healthcare professionals and their patients on vaccine ingredients [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)



New Primary Childhood Immunisation e-learning module [www.HSEland.ie](http://www.HSEland.ie)

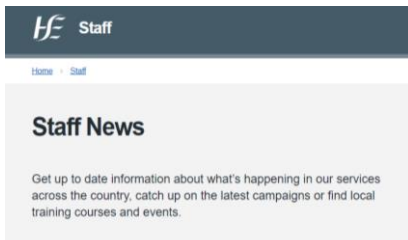
# Resources for Health Care Professionals



Immunisation Bulletin

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**NIO Ezine:** [You can sign up to be notified about latest editions for the NIO e-zine on <https://nio-news.com/sign-up/>. Please enter your name and email to be added to the list.



HSE [Staff news](#) & updates on LinkedIn

September 3<sup>rd</sup> HSE Webinar: Changes to Primary Childhood Immunisation (PCI) Schedule - Children born on or after 1st October 2024 can be found here <https://youtu.be/PQDkyG3cxsQ>

PCI explainer video for use on social media/sharing internally is available here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5L8-adi8tU>





## Your Campaign contacts

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Marchelewska and Tonya Myles @ Cairdre