

6 VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES

a A change in the measles vaccination schedule

The measles vaccination product and schedule in South Africa has been updated since 01 December 2015. A product called MeasBio[®] (Biovac) replaces the previous product Rouvax[®] (Sanofi Pasteur) due to the manufacturer discontinuing the previous product. MeasBio[®] has been in use in other countries for over 30 years. Both Measbio and Rouvax are live attenuated vaccines.

MeasBio[®] will be administered at the age of 6 months and 12 months, requiring two additional visits in the Expanded Programme on Immunisation schedule. MeasBio[®] is administered subcutaneously while Rouvax[®], licensed for both intramuscular and subcutaneous administration, was usually given intramuscularly.

The reasons for the change in schedule are twofold. Firstly, MeasBio[®] should be given alone in all vaccination visits. Measles vaccination was previously administered at 9 months and 18 months. Previously, the dose at 9 months was given concurrently with pneumococcal vaccine (PCV) and at 18 months it was given concurrently with the 6-in-1 vaccine, Hexaxim[®] (Sanofi Pasteur). The schedule change allows measles vaccine to be given as the only vaccine at the scheduled visit.

Secondly, it has been recommended to vaccinate against measles as early as 6 months of age to prevent the high morbidity and mortality associated with the disease in young infants. South Africa had previously used an additional 6-month dose of vaccine during outbreak situations or for those

living with HIV. A 6-month dose as part of the routine schedule should prevent serious measles complications in young infants. As vaccine efficacy only becomes optimal after 1 year of age, a second dose is essential to ensure high population immunity rates.

In the interim period during the change in schedule for those children who present at 9 or 18 months, measles vaccination will be given as first preference and the other required vaccine postponed for 4 weeks – namely PCV would be postponed to age 10 months and Hexaxim[®] to 19 months.

Measles is a highly contagious epidemic-prone disease. Signs and symptoms of measles include high fever and rash with cough, coryza or conjunctivitis. The disease may cause complications such as pneumonia, diarrhoea, blindness, encephalitis or death. Measles vaccination is a safe, effective and cost effective way of preventing measles morbidity and mortality. Measles is targeted for elimination in the African region by 2020. Health care workers are encouraged to take each opportunity to check child vaccination status and catch up missed vaccinations according to recommended guidelines. It is never too late to catch up measles vaccination.

Source: Centre for Vaccines and Immunology, NICD -NHLS (melindam@nicd.ac.za)

EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNISATION – EPI (SA) REVISED CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION SCHEDULE FROM DECEMBER 2015

Age of child	Vaccines needed	How and where it is given
At birth	BCG Bacilles Calmette Guerin	Right arm
	OPV (0) Oral Polio Vaccine	Drops by mouth
6 weeks	OPV (1) Oral Polio Vaccine	Drops by mouth
	RV (1) Rotavirus Vaccine	Liquid by mouth
	DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV (1) Diphtheria, Tetanus, Acellular Pertussis, Inactivated Polio Vaccine and Haemophilus Influenzae Type B and Hepatitis B Combined	Intramuscular/left thigh
	PCV (1) Pneumococcal Conjugated Vaccine	Intramuscular/ right thigh
10 weeks	DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV (2) Diphtheria, Tetanus, Acellular Pertussis, Inactivated Polio Vaccine and Haemophilus Influenzae Type B and Hepatitis B Combined	Intramuscular/left thigh
14 weeks	RV (2) Rotavirus Vaccine*	Liquid by mouth
	DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV (3) Diphtheria, Tetanus, Acellular Pertussis, Inactivated Polio Vaccine and Haemophilus Influenzae Type B and Hepatitis B Combined	Intramuscular/left thigh
	PCV (2) Pneumococcal Conjugated Vaccine	Intramuscular/right thigh
6 months	Measles Vaccine (1)**	Subcutaneous/left thigh
9 months	PCV(3) Pneumococcal Conjugated Vaccine	Intramuscular/right thigh
12 months	Measles Vaccine (2)**	Subcutaneous/right arm
18 months	DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV (4) Diphtheria, Tetanus, Acellular Pertussis, Inactivated Polio Vaccine and Haemophilus Influenzae Type B and Hepatitis B Combined	Intramuscular/left arm
6 years (both boys and girls)	Td Vaccine Tetanus and reduced strength of Diphtheria Vaccine	Intramuscular/left arm
12 years (both boys and girls)	Td Vaccine Tetanus and reduced strength of Diphtheria Vaccine	Intramuscular/left arm

*Rotavirus Vaccine should NOT be administered after 24 weeks

**Do not administer with any other vaccine



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Figure 6. National Department of Health Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI) revised schedule, as from December 2015