BCG vaccination programme for children under the age of 12 months

Baby's name

Date D D M M Y Y Y Y

Time of vaccination /

We gave your child the following vaccination today

BCG Left arm Right arm

What are common side effects after the BCG vaccine?

While one in every 20 children will have no side effects to the BCG vaccine, it is common for most children to have the following:

- hardening or thickening of skin (induration) where they got the injection.
- swelling.
- a small sore and scar at the injection site.

Your child may also get a swollen gland (lymph node) in their armpit. This swelling is usually less than one cm wide which is about the size of a pea. Lymph nodes are part of our immune system. They protect us from infections.

What do these side effects look like?

After the BCG vaccine, your child may have (see also the images below):

- a small lump where the injection was given (injection site).
- redness or soreness at the injection site.
- the injection site may ooze for a while – it can take several weeks or sometimes months for the injection site to heal completely.
- a tiny scar after healing.

These side effects are normal and show the vaccine is working.

BCG vaccination reaction and scar development

1 **Painless red, raised bump.** Normal: 2-4 weeks.

2 **Bump softens, oozes pus, then crusts over.** Normal: 6-8 weeks.

3 **Sore heals and leaves a scar.** Normal: 2-4 months.

Plain English Approved by NALA

PROTECT PREVENT IMMUNISE

If you are concerned about your child, you can contact the vaccination team during office hours from Monday to Friday.

If you need medical advice outside these hours, please contact your GP (doctor).

Vaccine Team																		
Mobile																		
Email																		

How should I care for my child after the vaccine?

You should allow the injection site on your child's arm to dry.

Try to prevent friction around the injection site. For example, avoid putting tight clothes on it as they could rub against the site and irritate it.

If your child's injection site oozes, you may put a dry dressing on it until a scab forms – but let the wound have times when it is uncovered to allow the air to speed up healing.

Washing and swimming

You do not need to protect the injection site from getting wet during washing or having a bath.

If you want to bring your child swimming, put a waterproof plaster over the injection site during swimming only. If this type of dressing is left on too long, it may delay healing and lead to your child having a larger scar.

You can also find links to the patient information leaflets for the vaccine at: www.hpra.ie

Search for BCG vaccine to read the relevant information.

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