



## **PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM ROTAVIRUS INFECTION**

### **What is rotavirus infection?**

Rotavirus is a virus that causes a gastrointestinal infection. It is very contagious and most commonly affects children between the ages of 6 months and 2 years. Symptoms include fever, vomiting, watery diarrhea and stomach pain, which may last from three to eight days. The loss of fluids from vomiting and diarrhea can lead to dehydration in young children. Rotavirus infection is one of the most common causes of visits to the doctor and hospitalization in this age group.

### **How is rotavirus spread?**

Rotavirus spreads easily when the virus enters the body through the mouth. The stool of infected children contains a lot of germs, which may end up on their hands, the hands of their caregiver or on other items. The virus is spread by contact with an infected person or indirectly through contact with contaminated articles (e.g. toys, furniture).

### **How can rotavirus infection be prevented?**

- Have your child immunized.
- Wash your hands and your child's hands often, especially after diaper changes, bathroom visits and before preparing food

### **Why is a vaccine recommended for rotavirus?**

The vaccine helps to prevent the illness in young children and will be offered to children at 2 and 4 months of age as part of the current routine Newfoundland and Labrador Immunization Schedule. The vaccine is a liquid and will be administered by mouth.

### **Are there side effects associated with the rotavirus vaccine?**

Following immunization with the rotavirus vaccine, some children (more than 10%) may experience common side effects such as irritability, fever and loss of appetite for a day or two. Very few children (less than 10%) may experience other less common side effects including fatigue, diarrhea, vomiting, cough and runny nose. Extreme abdominal cramping and pain is rare, if your infant experiences this please see a physician right away and inform them your child was immunized with Rotavirus vaccine.

### **Who should NOT get the rotavirus vaccine?**

- Children who have had an allergic reaction (such as trouble breathing or hives or a rash) to a previous dose of rotavirus vaccine
- Children who have had an allergic reaction to any ingredient in the vaccine or component of the container
- Children who have a history of intussusception (when one segment of intestine folds inside the other causing the intestinal wall to swell and bleed)
- Children with uncorrected congenital malformations of the gastrointestinal tract that could lead to intussusception
- Children with Severe Combined Immunodeficiency (SCID) disorder

### **Can breastfeeding continue during the immunization period?**

Yes. Breastfeeding can continue during the immunization period. There is no evidence to suggest that breastfeeding would reduce the protection offered by this vaccine.

### **Can children eat food or drink liquids before or after immunization?**

Yes. There are no restrictions to a child's eating or drinking, including breast feeding, before or after immunization.

**For additional information  
and services contact your  
Regional Health Authority**

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