

Good to know about



Folkhälsomyndigheten

Vaccination against tuberculosis

Tuberculosis is a common disease in many countries. Vaccination against tuberculosis is recommended for children whose family comes from a country where tuberculosis is much more common than in Sweden.

Tuberculosis is an infection caused by a bacteria and is spread through the air by coughing. It generally affects the lungs, but other parts of the body can also be affected. In most cases the disease develops slowly, and symptoms include a persistent cough, weight loss and fever. The infection can also lie dormant in the body for many years and then flare up. When tuberculosis is dormant, it is not contagious.

In Sweden, tuberculosis is a rare disease. Vaccination is therefore only offered to children who have an increased risk of becoming infected, such as children whose family comes from a country where tuberculosis is common.

What protection does the vaccine provide?

The vaccine, known as the BCG vaccine, protects young children against severe forms of tuberculosis, such as meningitis and what is known as “disseminated tuberculosis”. The vaccine also provides good protection against pulmonary tuberculosis in older children.

Side effects are rare

Serious reactions to the BCG vaccine are very rare. Side effects may include fever, headache or swelling of the lymph nodes in the armpit. In rare cases, a larger wound that takes a long time to heal may develop at the injection site.

Do you want more information?

You are always welcome to contact your child health centre. You can also learn more at:

- 1177.se
- Folkhälsomyndigheten.se
- Lakemedelsverket.se

THE VACCINATION PROCESS

Before the vaccination

Before the vaccination, the BHV nurse (paediatric health nurse) will want to know how your child is feeling. If you are the child's guardian, you will therefore need to answer a few questions. If you have any questions about the vaccination, you may also take the opportunity to ask the BHV nurse.

The vaccination

The vaccination against tuberculosis is usually offered when your child is about six weeks old. The vaccine is administered in a syringe and is injected into the skin of the upper left arm.

What happens after the vaccination

The vaccination causes a mild skin infection. Two to four weeks after vaccination, a small, hard spot usually forms at the injection site. This hard spot grows and becomes red, and after a while it becomes a sore that may weep pus. The wound usually heals by itself within 3–4 months. Your child should avoid swimming in a pool while the sore is open. Some children never get a sore – only a hard spot that disappears after a few weeks or months.

