



Rotarix (RV1) is a live attenuated rotavirus ORAL vaccine. It MUST NOT be injected. Please familiarise yourself with the rotavirus chapter in the Immunisation Handbook 2017.

Recommended immunisation schedule

What is the recommended Rotarix schedule?

Rotarix is a two dose course. First dose given at 6 week immunisation visit, second dose at 3 month immunisation visit.

What if a baby has started a rotavirus course with Rotateq, can they complete the course with Rotarix?

Yes, provided the baby is under 25 weeks and 0 days of age. Please note this timing differs from the previous timing for Rotateq. A minimum of 4 weeks is required between each of the rotavirus vaccine doses. Please refer to Table 1.

Table 1. Changing from RotaTeq to Rotarix to complete a rotavirus vaccine course

Number of RotaTeq doses received	Number of Rotarix doses required before age 25 weeks 0 days i.e. the latest is 24 weeks and 6 days
One RotaTeq dose	Two Rotarix doses#
Two RotaTeq doses	One Rotarix dose#
Three RotaTeq doses	No Rotarix doses required

Note: Rotarix doses are administered when
 » The infant reaches the appropriate Schedule age to receive their next rotavirus vaccine dose, OR
 » A minimum of 4 weeks after the previous dose, whichever date is later, AND
 » The infant is aged less than 25 weeks 0 days old, i.e. the latest is 24 weeks and 6 days.

When is a baby too old to have their first dose of Rotarix?

When they are 15 weeks and 0 days old, if they haven't already received one or two doses of RotaTeq. The latest that the first rotavirus vaccine dose can be given is 14 weeks and 6 days of age because of a possible increase in risk of intussusception.

If a baby does not have their first rotavirus vaccine dose before they are 15 weeks old they cannot have any rotavirus vaccine doses.

What happens if a baby is inadvertently given their first dose of Rotarix when aged 15 weeks or older?

A baby who inadvertently receives their first dose of Rotarix when aged 15 weeks or older should complete their course of vaccines. Remaining doses must be given before the infant is aged 25 weeks and 0 days.

When is a baby too old to have a dose of Rotarix?

When they are aged 25 weeks and 0 days. The latest that a Rotarix dose can be given is 24 weeks and 6 days of age because of a possible increase in risk of intussusception. This is much earlier than the upper age limit to complete catch-up doses of RotaTeq.

When only Rotarix stock is available, a baby who does not complete their rotavirus vaccine course before turning 25 weeks old cannot complete a course of rotavirus vaccines.

Dosage and administration

Are there minimum intervals between administration of Rotarix and a BCG, blood transfusion or immunoglobulin product?

No minimum interval is required between administration of a live oral vaccine and a live injected vaccine (BCG), blood transfusion or immunoglobulin product.

Do we repeat a dose of Rotarix if the baby spits the vaccine out or vomits straight after receiving their dose?

No. Do not re-administer the dose if the infant spits it out or vomits immediately after administration.

Do babies have to wait 20 minutes if they only had Rotarix?

Yes. Rotarix is a vaccine and, like all vaccines, has the potential risk of anaphylaxis even though it is administered orally. The Immunisation standards for vaccinators require the vaccinator to provide safe immunisation and vaccinees to remain under observation for a minimum of 20 minutes after immunisation.

Can we give Rotarix through a nasogastric (NG) tube?

Yes. Rotarix is a liquid vaccine for oral administration (see Contraindications and precautions).

Contraindications and precautions

What are the contraindications for Rotarix?

- » Severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID).
- » Uncorrected congenital gastrointestinal malformation that predisposes to intussusception.
- » Previous intussusception.
- » Anaphylaxis to a previous dose or component of the vaccine.

What if a baby is suspected or known to have a weakened immune system due to a medical condition or medication?

Seek further medical advice before administering Rotarix vaccine to the baby.

Can a baby whose mother was on immunosuppressive medication during pregnancy have Rotarix?

Seek further medical advice before administering Rotarix vaccine to the baby.

Can a baby living in a house with someone who is pregnant or immune compromised have Rotarix?

Yes. After changing nappies caregivers only need to follow standard hygiene measures, i.e. wash their hands using soap and water and dry them well, or use liquid hand gel.

Can a baby with colic or severe reflux have Rotarix?

Yes, unless the baby has one of the abovementioned conditions.

Can a baby with a nasogastric (NG) tube have Rotarix?

It depends on why they need a NG tube: Rotarix is contraindicated if the baby has an uncorrected gastrointestinal malformation that predisposes to intussusception. Rotarix can be given if the NG tube is in situ for any other reason.

After immunisation

Should breast feeding be delayed after a baby receives Rotarix?

No. A baby can breast feed immediately after immunisation. No special precautions need to be taken by the mother.

Can a woman with cracked nipples breast feed her baby after they receive Rotarix?

Yes. A mother can safely breast feed her baby any time after they have received Rotarix. No special precautions need to be taken by the mother.

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After immunisation continued

What vaccine responses could occur?

One or two babies in 100 may have mild vomiting or diarrhoea caused by the vaccine during the 7 days after immunisation. However, studies suggest these symptoms may be unrelated to rotavirus vaccine because as many, and sometimes more, babies who received a placebo liquid not containing rotavirus, also developed these symptoms.

There may be a small increase in the risk of developing intussusception during the week following the first vaccine dose and a smaller risk after the second dose.

How will parents recognise if their baby develops intussusception?

It is recommended that parents seek medical advice if their baby develops intermittent crying/screaming episodes, start pulling their knees towards their chest, vomiting, or has pink or red coloured jelly-like stools.

How long is the vaccine virus excreted in stools?

The weakened rotavirus from the vaccine may be found in stools for up to 28 days after the first immunisation and up to 15 days after the second dose.

What hygiene measures are needed for nappy changing after a baby has Rotarix?

After changing nappies caregivers only need to follow standard hygiene measures, i.e. wash their hands using soap and water and dry them well, or use liquid hand gel.

Do babies have to use disposable nappies after they have Rotarix?

No. Babies can wear cloth or disposable nappies after immunisation. No special precautions need to be taken when washing cloth nappies.

How should vomits or spills be managed after a baby has had Rotarix?

Standard hygiene measures can be used to clean up vomit or spills. No special precautions need to be taken.

Can someone kiss a baby on the mouth after the baby has Rotarix?

No studies have investigated transmission of vaccine virus from kissing a baby on the mouth after immunisation. However, it is theoretically possible for a person to be exposed to weakened vaccine virus in this way.

Can a baby go to day care after they have Rotarix?

Yes. After changing nappies caregivers only need to follow standard hygiene measures, i.e. wash their hands using soap and water and dry them well, or use liquid hand gel.

Can a baby go swimming after they have Rotarix?

Yes.

References

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