

April 15, 2021

Update: Important Changes to Manitoba's Rotavirus Immunization Program

Due to a national transition from RotaTeq® vaccine (a live pentavalent (Rota-5) vaccine administered orally at 2, 4 and 6 months) to Rotarix™ vaccine (a live monovalent (Rota-1) vaccine administered orally at 2 and 4 months), **all infants born on or after April 1st 2021 will now be on the two-dose Rotarix™ schedule at 2 and 4 months of age.** Rotarix™ (GSK) and RotaTeq® (Merck) are equivalent vaccines in terms of clinical safety and efficacy; the primary difference is in the dosing schedule (i.e., two versus three doses).

The first dose of rotavirus vaccine (Rotarix™ or RotaTeq®) should be given no earlier than 6 weeks of age and before 15 weeks of age, with at least 4 weeks between doses. The administration of all doses **must** be completed by 8 months of age.

Generally, all infants born on or before March 31st 2021 will be on the 3-dose schedule (RotaTeq® at 2, 4 and 6 months). Given that the two rotavirus vaccines differ in composition and schedule, **the vaccine series should be completed with the same product whenever possible.**

- If any dose in the series was RotaTeq®, a total of 3 doses should be administered.
- If the first dose was RotaTeq®, and there is no more RotaTeq® available, complete the series with 2 doses of Rotarix™, for a total 3 doses.

Please avoid any RotaTeq® wastage wherever possible.

Please note that a new tariff code has been reactivated to delineate between the two rotavirus vaccines: tariff 8897 for rota-1 (Rotarix™). (Tariff 8778 will remain active for a period of time and is to be used for rota-5 (RotaTeq®) administration). It is of the utmost importance to delineate which vaccine (tariff 8778 or 8897) was used for the vaccine to be accurately captured in the Manitoba Immunization Registry in order to aid in informed decision-making.

The updated *Rotavirus Vaccine Factsheet for Parents & Guardians* and the updated *Questions & Answers for Health Care Providers* documents will be available online May 15, 2021 at: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/rotavirus.html>.

All immunizations, as part of Manitoba's Immunization Program are publicly-funded (i.e. free-of-charge).

Please share this information with all relevant colleagues in your facility or clinic.

Sincerely,



Richard Baydack, PhD
Director
Communicable Disease Control



Tim Hilderan, MD FRCP
Medical Lead, Vaccines
Communicable Disease Control