www.promovax.eu

Funded by
the Health Programme
of the European Union

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe

A

In what way can this educational material help me?

This material is designed to help you get informed and understand more about vaccinations.

It aims to help you:

- learn more about why vaccinations are important and how they can protect you
- find out which diseases vaccinations prevent
- find useful information on where you can get vaccinated
- obtain your personal vaccination record

How can you use this material?

- Read the educational material and ask your doctor any questions that you may have.
- Share this educational material with anyone who you think might be interested in vaccinations.
- Bring the personal vaccination record included in this educational material to your doctor. Ask your doctor to record your vaccinations in it. Carry the immunization record with you every time you have a doctor's appointment.

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe

B

Why are vaccinations important?

Vaccinations protect from specific infectious diseases that can make people very sick, disabled or even lead them to death. Around the world, millions of people die every year from diseases that can be prevented by vaccination.

Over the years, vaccines have prevented many cases of illness and saved millions of lives. Also, some diseases that killed or disabled people in the past have today disappeared.

For example, smallpox vaccination eliminated smallpox worldwide. This was a very dangerous disease that does not exist anymore! So, your children today do not need to have smallpox vaccines.

If we continue to vaccinate now, some diseases of today will no longer be around to harm children in the future!

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe

C

Who needs vaccinations?

Vaccinations can save your child's life!

Children still get diseases that could have been avoided if they had been vaccinated. In fact, some diseases appear more often over the past few years, even though vaccinations could have prevented them.

Especially, babies and infants are very sensitive. They need help to fight some infectious diseases.

- → You can protect them with vaccinations at an early stage.
- → It is very important that your children are vaccinated at the right age.
- → Remember that most vaccinations have to be given more than once to make your child's defense system stronger.

Discuss with your doctor when your child should receive vaccinations

Adults also need vaccines

Many adults become ill, are disabled and die each year from diseases that could easily have been prevented by vaccines.

- Everyone, from babies to young adults to older people, can benefit from vaccinations. You are never too old for vaccinations.
- To be protected against some diseases for all your life, you need to be vaccinated as an adult more than once.

Here are some of the vaccines recommended for adults:
influenza, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, pneumococcal, meningococcal, zoster (shingles), hepatitis A, hepatitis B.
You can read more about some of these on page 14.

Vaccinations not only protect you, but people around you as well

Vaccinations **protect** you and your family members. Moreover, they also help to protect others in our community as well by "breaking the infection chain": they don't let the disease transmit from one person to the other. The more people are vaccinated, the less possible it is for germs to get transmitted in the population.

Remember!
It is never too late for you and your family to get vaccinated.

Did you or your child miss a vaccination? Is your child older than the recommended ages for vaccination?

Please ask your doctor what you need to do!

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe

D

Which diseases do vaccines prevent?

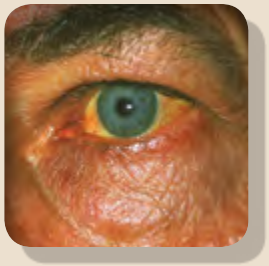
Vaccines can keep you and your children safe. They can protect you from many serious and sometimes life-threatening infections. **Without them, you or your family members could get very sick.**

Some vaccinations are necessary for most children and adults. Others are only needed for certain groups of people (it depends for example on your current job, your age or your state of health). It can be that in the country you now live, different vaccination regulations apply than in your home country.

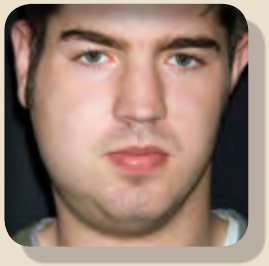
To find out which vaccinations are recommended for you, please ask your doctor.

D

In the table below you will find information on some diseases that can be prevented by vaccinations.

Transmittable disease	Mode of Transmission	Symptoms	Complications
Hepatitis A 	Personal contact, contaminated food or water.	Hepatitis A can cause: loss of appetite , fever, vomiting, stomach pain and dark urine. Often, especially in children below the age of six, the disease may have no symptoms.	Serious illness is rare with hepatitis A infection. The illness can be unpleasant and make you feel quite ill, but most people fully recover. However, there is a small chance of developing severe hepatitis and liver failure. There is no treatment for hepatitis A, but the **hepatitis A vaccine** can prevent it.
Hepatitis B 	Contact with blood or other body fluids of an infected person.	Maybe no symptoms. Some people have acute illness with symptoms that last several weeks, such as yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice), dark urine, extreme fatigue, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.	In some people, the hepatitis B virus can cause a chronic liver infection that can later develop into cirrhosis of the liver or liver cancer. The likelihood that the hepatitis infection becomes chronic depends upon the age at which a person becomes infected. Young children who become infected with the hepatitis B virus are the most likely to develop chronic infection.
Measles 	Air, direct contact.	Symptoms are rash and high fever, runny nose and cough. The rash starts on the face and upper neck and slowly spreads downwards.	Measles can result in complications, such as lung infection or ear infection. Serious complications, such as brain inflammation (encephalitis) and/or permanent brain damage and death can occur. Even though there is no treatment for Measles, **the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine** can prevent it.

D

Transmittable disease	Mode of Transmission	Symptoms	Complications
Varicella (chickenpox) 	Air, direct contact.	The infection usually starts with fever and a rash on the face that spreads to the rest of the body. The rash begins as red bumps that eventually become blisters.	Varicella is generally a mild disease, but can be severe and even fatal in otherwise healthy children (less than 1 out of every 10,000 cases). Varicella can cause pneumonia, bacterial skin infection, liver inflammation, and brain inflammation. Complications are more common among adolescents and adults, and in persons with problems in their defense system. Even though there is no treatment for varicella, **the Varicella vaccine** can prevent it.
Mumps 	Air, direct contact.	Mumps causes fever and swelling of the glands in front of the ears and above the jaw.	Mumps can cause brain infection (encephalitis), lead to hear loss (deafness) and reduced fertility and rarely sterility (not being able to have children). Even though there is no treatment for Mumps, **the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine** can prevent it.
Rubella (German measles) 	Air, direct contact.	It initially has symptoms like the flu. Later on, a reddish rash that is not itchy develops.	Rubella is usually a mild illness. The biggest danger is if a pregnant woman gets rubella in the first weeks of pregnancy: she may lose the baby, or the virus can cause serious problems to the unborn baby, like deafness and damage to the heart and eye. Even though there is no treatment for Rubella, **the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine** can prevent it.

D

Transmittable disease	Mode of Transmission	Symptoms	Complications
Pneumococcus 	Air, direct contact.	Pneumococcus causes: → ear infections → sinus infections → lung infections (pneumonia), and → infection of the tissue covering the brain and the spinal cord (meningitis)	Infections caused by pneumococcus can be very serious in young children and adults with medical problems, such as diabetes, heart disease or lung disease. 28% of patients with meningitis with Pneumococcus die.
Meningococcus 	Air, direct contact.	Meningococcus is a germ that causes infection of the tissue covering the brain and the spinal cord (meningitis). The symptoms include: high fever, stiff neck, vomiting, and confusion	Meningococcal meningitis is very serious and can cause death very rapidly, within hours. But even if it doesn't lead to death, disability for life can happen, such as amputated fingers or limbs. 10% of patients with meningitis with Meningococcus die.
Pertussis (Whooping cough) 	Air, direct contact.	Pertussis causes serious cough. The disease usually starts as a cold. Severe cough develops one week later. The cough can persist for weeks (100-day cough), comes in attacks and sometimes can cause very young babies to stop breathing.	Pertussis can be dangerous for young children, especially infants (babies younger than 1 year old). 50% of infants with pertussis need to be admitted in the hospital. They may suffer from lung infection (pneumonia), fits or brain damage (encephalitis). They may also stop breathing during the cough attacks. Even though there is no treatment for pertussis, **the DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis) vaccine** can prevent it.

D

Transmittable disease	Mode of Transmission	Symptoms	Complications
Tetanus 	Exposure through cuts in the skin.	Tetanus causes muscle spasm. → The first sign is usually spasm of the jaw. → This is followed by stiffness of the neck, difficulty in swallowing and stiffness of the abdominal muscles. → The illness also causes fever, sweating and high blood pressure. → It also makes your heart go very fast.	10% of people who get tetanus die. → The illness can cause spasm of the vocal cords (we use them to speak) and stop breathing. → It may also make your heart not beat normally or cause high blood pressure, etc. Even though there is no treatment for tetanus, **the DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis) vaccine** can prevent it.
Diphtheria 	Air, direct contact.	The disease starts with cold symptoms, such as runny nose and cough. Then, it causes a thick coating, like a membrane, at the back of the throat. This makes it difficult to breathe or swallow.	Diphtheria is a serious disease: 5%–10% of all people with diphtheria die. → The thick membrane that is created on the back of the throat can cause sufoccation (not breathing). → The illness may affect the heart and cause abnormal rythm. Even though there is no treatment for diphtheria, **the DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis) vaccine** can prevent it.

D

Transmittable disease	Mode of Transmission	Symptoms	Complications
Poliomyelitis (polio) 	Through the mouth.	Poliomyelitis may cause no symptoms or cause sore throat, fever, nausea and headache.	Poliomyelitis can cause paralysis and death.
Influenza 	Air, direct contact.	Influenza causes fever, muscle pain, sore throat, cough and extreme fatigue.	In severe cases influenza can cause infection in the lungs (pneumonia).

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe

E

Are vaccinations safe?

The safety record of vaccines is excellent.

- → It takes years of testing for a vaccine to be licensed and used.
- → Once in use, vaccines are checked continuously for safety.

What about side effects?

Just like many medications, vaccinations can sometimes cause side effects. The most common are:

- → irritation (for example crying for a long time)
- → swelling or pain in the place of injection
- → fever (usually low)
- → muscle pain
- → loss of appetite

If they happen, these effects are usually **mild** and **go away very quickly**.

More serious side effects are rare reactions to the vaccination. Your nurse or doctor should inform you about those side effects. If they don't, you have the right to ask them.

Keep in mind, that the medical staff that administers vaccinations is well trained and knows what to do if any serious reactions occur.

It is important to remember:
If you or your children and family are not vaccinated, the risks of serious disease are much higher than the risks of serious health reactions to a vaccination.

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe

F

You have the right to ask for an interpreter

Discussing and understanding health issues and vaccinations can be difficult. It can be even more difficult when you are not speaking in your own language.

If you are more comfortable communicating with your doctor or nurse in your own language, you can ask for an interpreter.

Interpreters will help you better understand what the doctor is saying. They will also help the doctor better understand your situation and questions.

- → You can ask for an interpreter when you book your appointment.
- → You can ask for an interpreter when you are at the medical office or the hospital.
- → It is better to use an interpreter instead of your family members, especially children.

In the case that interpreters are not available, find someone you feel safe with and make sure you get the information you need.

Make sure you ask all your questions to the doctor before you leave the office.
To make sure you don't forget anything, write all your questions down before your appointment.

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe

G

MYTHS and FACTS

Misconception 1:

"Vaccinations do not work"

FACTS:

Vaccines are one of the best ways to prevent disease:

- Vaccination saves more than 3 million lives in the world each year.
- Vaccination saves millions more from suffering illness or life-long disability.
- Infectious diseases were the first cause of child death in the world, before the use of vaccinations.
- Smallpox was the first infectious disease that was eradicated because of vaccinations in 1977.
- In countries with successful national immunization programs, the number of diseases that can be prevented by vaccines have decreased. Also, several diseases, for example poliomyelitis, have been eradicated.
- On the other hand, in countries where vaccination coverage is lower, the number of vaccine preventable diseases has gone up.

Misconception 2:
"I was reading on the internet that the vaccine against mumps-measles-rubella causes autism."

FACTS:

Research has proven that this vaccine (MMR vaccine) does not cause autism.

Autism is frequently diagnosed during the same period of time the MMR vaccine is administered. However, the vaccine does not cause autism. Well designed and conducted studies show that MMR vaccine is not a cause for autism.

Misconception 3:
"I am too old to be vaccinated. Vaccines are only for children."

FACTS: **Adults also need to be vaccinated.**

- → Some vaccines you received as a child need a "booster" dose when you are older: this dose increases the protection of the vaccine. It helps your defense system to avoid diseases.
- → In fact, some vaccinations are as important for older people as they are for younger. For example, the vaccine against pneumococcus protects you from a disease that can cause severe pneumonia (lung infection) and even death.
- → Some vaccinations protect you from illnesses that appear every year. An example is the flu.
- → You should get vaccinated for Tetanus and Diphtheria every ten years throughout your life.

We are never too old to be vaccinated.

Misconception 4:
"Since vaccine-preventable diseases almost do not exist in Europe, vaccinations are no longer necessary."

FACTS:

It is true that the frequency of many vaccine preventable diseases has decreased in Europe. However, we still need vaccines to keep diseases under control.

Think of what happened with measles because people stopped getting vaccinations: In 2011, France, Ukraine, Italy, Romania, Spain and Germany reported outbreaks of measles. Children and adults suffering from measles increased dramatically (4-fold) and some of them died.

Misconception 5:
"Getting many vaccinations for different diseases at the same time is not good. You can have more harmful side effects and can overload your defense system."

FACTS: **Vaccines do not weaken your defense system. They actually make it stronger.**

- → Studies prove that it is the same to receive one or more vaccines at the same time.
- → The use of combination vaccines (two or more separate vaccines that have been combined in one single shot) reduces the number of shots.
- → Even babies' defense system is strong enough to respond to many vaccinations given at the same time.

Vaccinations do not harm your defense system.
They make it **stronger** to protect against specific diseases of children and adults.

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe

H

USEFUL TOOLS

Where can I get immunized?

Croatia

- Adults and migrant workers can receive vaccinations at the **Croatian National Institute of Public Health** *(Department of Epidemiology)*.
- For your children visit **family medicine doctors** and **pediatricians**.

Cyprus

- You can get vaccinations for free at Public Immunization Sites:
  public hospitals, health/vaccination centers.
- Children can get immunized for free at schools.
- You can also get vaccinations at the private health centers and offices *(i.e. General Practitioners)*, but with charge.

Germany

→ Ask your doctor *(general practitioner)* or any licensed doctor to help you find where you can get vaccinated.

Greece

→ Ask your doctor *(general practitioner)* or any licensed doctor to help you find where you can get vaccinated.

Hungary

→ Ask your doctor *(general practitioner)* or any licensed doctor to help you find where you can get vaccinated.

Italy

→ To access vaccinations you need to be registered at the National Health System.

Registration can be done at the local health agency of the municipality where you live. The vaccinations provided free of charge are reported in the 2012-2014 Italian immunization schedule: http://www.salute.gov.it/dettaglio/pdPrimoPianoNew.jsp?id=339&sub=3&lang=it). For vaccinations that are not for free, a fee can be requested according to regional fees.

Norway

→ **Local public health centers** and **school health services** provide vaccinations to children and young people.

The public health center is an office in each municipality and often in every town. It has one or more public health nurses. There is also a doctor at the clinic for a few hours a week.

Poland

→ Ask your doctor *(general practitioner)* or any licensed doctor to help you find where you can get vaccinated.

What if I have no health insurance and I cannot afford to get vaccinated or vaccinate my children? *(see contents)*

Croatia

→ Ask your doctor *(general practitioner)* or any licensed physician where you can get free vaccinations.

Cyprus

→ The Public Sector offers free of charge vaccination to all children and adults *(regardless of their nationality or social status).*

The free of charge vaccinations are for: Diphteria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Poliomyelitis, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Hepatitis B and Heamophilus Influenzae type b.

Germany

→ If you are a documented migrant, you have equal access to health services and vaccinations like non-migrants.

→ The German Standing Committee on Vaccination at the Robert-Koch-Institute (STIKO) publishes the recommended vaccinations every year. Your insurance covers the costs for the recommended vaccianations. For the standard vaccinations no extra payment must be paid.

→ If you are an asylum seeker you are eligible for vaccinations and limited other services.

→ For more information on vaccinations, please contact your general practitioner, pediatrician or any licensed physician.

Greece

- Ask your doctor *(general practitioner)* or any licensed physician if and where you can get free vaccinations.

Hungary

- In case of special conditions *(for example, epidemic outbreak prevention, like measles, hepatitis A, etc.)*, you can visit the health services of all the reception centers to get free vaccination.
- Minors staying more than 3 months in Hungary can get free vaccinations at all the primary health care physicians.
- Ask your doctor *(general practitioner)* or any licensed health physician for more information and whether you can get free vaccinations.

Italy

- The general practitioner and the family pediatrician offer general care and vaccination free of charge *(only compulsory vaccinations are free of charge)*.
- Ask your doctor (general practitioner) or any licensed physician if and where you can get free vaccinations.

Norway

- Children are vaccinated for free.
- Adults need to pay a fee for other vaccinations.
- If you have questions about vaccinations *(rights, costs, etc.)*, contact your doctor *(general practitioner)* or the public health center in your municipality.

Poland

- Ask your doctor *(general practitioner)* or any licensed health physician for more information and whether you can get free vaccinations.

Immunization Records

Ask your doctor to give you and your children a **personal immunization record** (card).

You should carry the immunization record with you during **every visit** to the doctor. A doctor or nurse should complete it every time you have a vaccination.

If your doctor does not have an immunization card for you or your children, remove and ask your doctor to use the following cards:

Immunization Record

Adult

First Name: **Last Name:**

Date of birth: **Sex:** ☐ M ☐ F

Medical Notes (allergies, vaccine reactions)**:**

Vaccine	**Type of Vaccine** *(LOT # & manufacturer)*	**Date** *(dd/mm/yyyy)*	**Physician's Signature**	**Date next dose is due**
Hepatitis B				
Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis				
Measles-Mumps-Rubella				
Pneumococcal				
Influenza				
Other				

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe

Immunization Record

Children

First Name: **Last Name:**

Date of birth: **Sex:** ☐ M ☐ F

Medical Notes (allergies, vaccine reactions)**:**

Vaccine	**Type of Vaccine** *(LOT # & manufacturer)*	**Date** *(dd/mm/yyyy)*	**Physician's Signature**	**Date next dose is due**
Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis				
OPV/IPV				
Measles-Mumps-Rubella				
Varicella				
Haemophilus influenzae type b				
Hepatitis B				
Pneumococcal				
Other				

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe

www.promovax.eu

PROMOVAX

Promote Vaccinations among Migrant Populations in Europe