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| 902 424-2358 |
| 902 424-4716 |

**Memorandum**

**To:** Health Care providers

**From:** Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer Health

**Date:** November 1, 2019

**Re:** Rotavirus vaccine added to the Childhood Immunization Schedule

I would like to inform you of changes to the publicly funded immunization program.

**Rotavirus vaccine** will now be added to the childhood immunization schedule for all children born as of November 1, 2019.

The addition of this vaccine will be reflected in the ***Nova Scotia Publicly Funded Vaccine/Immunoglobulin Eligibility Policy*** and the ***Routine Immunization Schedules for Children, Youth & Adults*** which can be found at <https://novascotia.ca/dhw/cdpc/info-for-professionals.asp>

The oral vaccine RotaTeq®, will be used in Nova Scotia. It is a three-dose series and should be given at 2, 4 and 6 months of age, similar to other childhood vaccines. The first dose should never be administered before 6 weeks of age or after 15 weeks of age and all doses in the series must be administered before 8 months of age. If the product is given off-schedule, refer to the [Canadian Immunization Guide](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/page-19-rotavirus-vaccine.html) (CIG) and the Rotavirus Vaccine Program Q&A attached for more information.

Most infants will tolerate the vaccine well and have no side effects; however, there may be a slightly higher rate of diarrhea and vomiting in the 7 days following the receipt of the vaccine. Parents should also be informed that there is also a low risk of intussuception following the vaccine. Parent education should include the signs and symptoms of intussuception and the importance of seeking medical care should symptoms develop. Other reported side effects are outlined in the CIG and Q&A.

Storage is important and the vaccinemust be kept refrigerated between +2° to +8° Celsius, protected from light, and never frozen. RotaTeq® should be given in a clinic or office setting by a health care provider or under the direction and supervision of a health care provider. For further information regarding the vaccine including administration, please refer to the [Product Monograph](https://www.merck.ca/static/pdf/ROTATEQ-PM_E.pdf).

The vaccine will be available, through your local Public Health office, beginning in December 2019.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the publicly funded immunization program.