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How effective Immunization Vaccination Program is enabling immunity in India

Overview

Immunity is the ability of a person to resist a particular infection or toxin by the action of specific antibodies or sensitized white blood cells. Immunization is the process whereby a person is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease.

We at Liberty Videocon General Insurance intend to present a lowdown on Immunization Vaccination Program in India and how it can achieve optimum immunity through proper and timely vaccination. We sincerely hope that this document will be an instrumental guide for achieving all round immunity in the Indian society at large.



Types of Immunity - Passive & Active

Passive Immunity is a type of naturally acquired immunity, and refers to antibody-mediated immunity conveyed to a fetus by its mother during pregnancy. Maternal antibodies are passed through the placenta to the fetus.

Active Immunity is the naturally acquired immunity that occurs when the person is exposed to a live pathogen (infection), develops the disease, and becomes immune as a result of the primary immune response, ie. the body produces antibodies against the antigen (pathogen).

Active Immunity can also be artificially acquired or induced by administration of a vaccine, a substance that contains the antigen. Vaccines stimulate the body's own immune system to protect the person against subsequent infection or disease. Vaccines protect against measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), HiB disease and chickenpox.

Vaccines can't prevent children from getting minor illnesses like colds, but they can keep children safe from many serious diseases.

Universal Immunization Program (UIP) - India

The Vaccination Schedule under the UIP is:

- **BCG (Bacillus Calmette Guerin)** 1 dose at birth (up to 1 year if not given earlier)
- **DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus Toxoid)** 5 doses; three primary doses at 6, 10, 14 weeks and two booster doses at 16-24 months and 5 years of age
- **OPV (Oral Polio Vaccine)** 5 doses; 0 dose at birth, three primary doses at 6, 10 and 14 weeks and one booster dose at 16-24 months of age
- **Hepatitis B Vaccine** 4 doses; 0 dose within 24 hours of birth and three doses at 6, 10 and 14 weeks of age
- **Measles & MMR** 2 doses; first dose at 9-12 months and second dose at 16-24 months of age
- **TT (Tetanus Toxoid)** 2 doses at 10 years and 16 years of age
- **TT-** for pregnant woman two doses, or one dose if previously vaccinated within 3 years
- **In addition, Japanese Encephalitis (JE Vaccine) Vaccine** was introduced in 112 endemic districts in campaign mode in a phased manner from 2006-10 and has now been incorporated under the Routine Immunization Program

Further, the Indian Academy of Pediatrics have recommended the following vaccinations:

- Hepatitis A
- Rota Virus
- Influenza Vaccine
- Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccines (PCV)
- Varicella Vaccine
- Typhoid Vaccine
- Meningococcal Vaccine
- Cholera Vaccine
- Japanese Encephalitis Vaccine
- Rabies Vaccine
- Human Papillomavirus Vaccine

A special mention needs to be made of the vaccine to prevent Cervical cancer. Cervical cancer, mainly caused by Human

Papillomavirus infection, is the leading cancer in Indian women and the second most common cancer in women worldwide. Though there are several methods of prevention of cervical cancer, prevention by vaccination is emerging as the most effective option, with the availability of two vaccines. Gardasil and Cervarix are preventive vaccines and do not treat Human Papilloma Virus infection or cervical cancer. They are recommended for women who are 9 to 25 years old who have not been exposed to Human Papilloma Virus.

While this is not an exhaustive list of vaccination programs that are available in India, the primary focus of this article is to highlight the need to have a proper knowledge on vaccinations for women and children. Following the recommendations laid down here would help prevent degenerative diseases and go a long way in evolving a generation of healthy individuals.

Trivia

- Immunization averts an estimated 2 to 3 million deaths every year from diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), and measles.
- Polio vaccination has been stopped in all countries except Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan.

Good to Remember

Our immune strength is highly dependent on exercise, our state of mind and an optimal intake of vitamins and minerals. Deficiency of vitamin A, B1, B2, B6, B12, Folic Acid, C and E suppress immunity due to deficiencies of iron, zinc, magnesium and selenium. An optimal intake of these nutrients is vital in boosting immune strength.



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