

## ITALY

The current Italian National Immunisation Program is carried out through vaccination clinics within the Italian National Health Service. As some vaccinations are mandatory by law for all newborns (diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis, hepatitis B) the network of vaccination clinic is capillary in all the areas of Italy.

Individual Local Health Units are in charge of vaccine purchase which are never locally produced. Vaccines are also available on the private market.

Currently, due to the Health system devolution, the Ministry of Health and the Regional Health authorities set formal agreements about the offer of immunisations not covered by mandatory regulations. Regional Health Authorities however are responsible for the local implementation of the program. In detail, representatives of Ministry of Health, regional health authorities, national institute of health, and scientific societies constitute the National Committee on Immunizations, in charge of updating the National Plan and the national recommended immunisation schedule including all vaccination recommended at national level.

According to the Italian regulation, childhood vaccinations included in the national schedules are guaranteed free of charge for all Italian as well as foreign children who live in the Country. Therefore the above vaccinations may be provided in any vaccination clinic, irrespectively from the area of residence. The estimated coverage for three doses of D-T-P-HBV-Hib-IPV vaccines is above 95% at 24 months of age.

Table 1 describes the current immunisation schedule for infants and childhood.

**Table 1: current immunisation schedule for infants and childhood in Italy, (source: MoH 2005)**

|                    | DTaP                 | Hib | Hepa B           | IPV | MMR | PCV              | Men C            | Varicella |                  |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----|------------------|-----|-----|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| <b>Birth</b>       |                      |     | Yes <sup>2</sup> |     |     | Yes <sup>3</sup> | Yes <sup>3</sup> |           |                  |
| <b>3 months</b>    | Yes                  | Yes | Yes              | Yes |     |                  |                  |           |                  |
| <b>4 months</b>    |                      |     |                  |     |     |                  |                  |           |                  |
| <b>5 months</b>    | Yes                  | Yes | Yes              | Yes |     |                  |                  |           |                  |
| <b>6 months</b>    |                      |     |                  |     |     |                  |                  |           |                  |
| <b>11 months</b>   | Yes                  | Yes | Yes              | Yes |     |                  |                  |           |                  |
| <b>13 months</b>   |                      |     |                  |     | Yes |                  |                  |           |                  |
| <b>15 months</b>   |                      |     |                  |     |     |                  |                  |           | Yes <sup>3</sup> |
| <b>24 months</b>   |                      |     |                  |     |     |                  |                  |           |                  |
| <b>36 months</b>   |                      |     |                  |     |     |                  |                  |           |                  |
| <b>5-6 years</b>   | Yes                  |     | Yes              | Yes |     |                  |                  |           |                  |
| <b>11-12 years</b> | Yes                  |     |                  |     | Yes |                  |                  |           |                  |
| <b>14-15 years</b> | (dTaP <sup>1</sup> ) |     |                  |     |     |                  |                  |           |                  |

### Legend:

DTaP: difto-tetanus-acellular pertussis vaccine

dTaP<sup>1</sup>: difto-tetanus-acellular pertussis vaccine for adults

IPV: inactivated antipolio vaccine

Hepa B<sup>2</sup>: Hepatitis B vaccine is administered at birth only to children born to HBsAg+ mother. All the others start immunisation at 3 months of age

Hib: Hemophilus Influenzae tipe B vaccine

MMR: measles, mumps, rubella vaccine

PCV: pneumococcal eptavalent coniugate vaccine

MEN C: meningococcal C coniugate vaccine

Policy for the offer of PCV, Men C and Varicella vaccines is set at regional level<sup>3</sup>

A plan for Eliminating Measles and Congenital Rubella has been launched in 2001 and MMR coverage is increasing in the recent years.

Combined vaccines, including mandatory and not mandatory vaccines, as the hexavalent product, are widely used.

Although the vaccination plan is nationally recommended, regions can decide independently to include in the schedule also vaccinations for other diseases, on the basis of the local epidemiological situation.

The national vaccination plan approved in 2005 includes recommendations on PCV, MEN-C and chicken pox vaccinations for selected groups of individuals (i.e. individual with high risk of acquiring the infection and/or developing severe clinical picture), but Regions can also decide for additional vaccination policies at local level.

Among immunisation programs for the adults, influenza is the only relevant at national level with the vaccination coverage target in each year of 75% of all population aged above 64 years. Influenza vaccine is administered by the same vaccination clinic but also by General practitioners of the National Health Service. Influenza is also recommended for high risk individuals < 65 years old with high risk conditions.

Reference web-sites in Italy on this topic:

Ministry of Health

(<http://www.ministerosalute.it/promozione/malattie/sezMalattie.jsp?label=vac>);

Epicentro (WHO recognised) ([www.epicentro.iss.it](http://www.epicentro.iss.it))

NIV (WHO recognised) (<http://www.levaccinazioni.it/>)

10/07/2006