

National immunization Programme in Lithuania

In Lithuania current National immunization programme is under responsibility of the Ministry of Health. Lithuanian immunization Schedule, rules of immunization are adopted by Minister of Health. Vaccination is performed in state and private primary health centres, GP centers, hospitals. According to Lithuanian law only medical doctor (pediatrician or GP) can administer vaccination.

Health institutions (primary health centres, GP, hospitals) report number of vaccinations (according Lithuanian immunization schedule and others) and number of children in each age group to public health centres. Public health centres report to national level - Centre for Communicable Diseases prevention and control.

Centre for Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control is responsible for preparing recommendations for vaccination, surveillance of vaccine preventable diseases, AEFI surveillance, monitoring and evaluation of vaccination coverage at the national level. Sufficient high coverage of vaccination is maintained in Lithuania (94 – 99 percent for DTP3, HepB3, MMR1 in age group under 2 years old). Range of coverage are not high throughout the country. There are no estimated regions with low vaccination coverage. All vaccines which are used in Lithuania have to be registered in State Medicine Control Agency of Lithuania or in EMEA (central registration).

Lithuanian immunization schedule concerns children under 18 years. According to Lithuanian legal documents medical doctor must receive signed agreement from parents before child vaccination.

At national level Lithuanian immunization schedule is being set and applied to whole country. All vaccines according to Lithuanian immunization schedule also rabies vaccine and immunoglobulin for postexposure treatment are funded from state budget. State Patient Fond prosecutes public tenders for vaccines procurement. Vaccines are stored and distributed in central vaccine's storehouse of Centre for Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control. Primary health centres, polyclinics, GP (state or private) take vaccines according to order from Centre for communicable diseases prevention and control. All vaccinations according to Lithuanian immunization schedule are free of charge for Lithuanian and children who live in the country. BCG, hepatitis B, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella and Haemophilus influenza vaccines are

routinely administered to children and teenagers (< 18 years). Rabies vaccine for patients postexposure treatment is free of charge. Influenza vaccine is recommended for elderly and risk groups, but not covered by state yet. Other vaccines are available in Lithuania too, but it is not free of charge for patients (vaccines for travelers, occupational risk groups etc). It is sold and can be used in private market. There are no vaccines manufacturers in Lithuania, several manufacturers have at least one product marketed in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian Immunization Schedule

(issued by Ministry of health on 16 September, 2004)

Age	Vaccine					
	DTP	Polio	Hib	MMR	HepB	BCG
Birth					HepB1	BCG
1 month					HepB2	
2 months	DTP+IPV+Hib					
4 months	DTP+IPV+Hib					
6 months	DTP+IPV+Hib				HepB3	
15-16 months				MMR1		
18 months	DTP+IPV+Hib					
6-7 years	DT	OPV		MMR2		
12 years		OPV		MMR2*	HepB	
15-16 years	Td					

*omit if two previous doses received.

Main points of this schedule are: BCG and HepB first dose for newborns, DTP-IPV-Hib vaccination is started for 2 months old infants, vaccinations scheme consist of 4 doses of DTP+ IPV+ HIB vaccine, hepatitis B vaccination for teenagers, mixed polio vaccination is used: IPV for infants and OPV for older children. Two doses MMR vaccination schedule (catch-up for 12 years old children), for preschool children is used DT vaccine and for teenagers – Td vaccine.

Future changes in Lithuania

Lithuania is changing national immunization schedule this autumn. It is going to switch OPV to IPV and to introduce combined vaccine with acellular pertussis.

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