

# Winter Is Here: Help Protect Your Baby From Rotavirus

(NAPSA)—Rotavirus is a highly contagious disease that can cause severe diarrhea in infants and young children. Rotavirus infections **occur mostly during the winter** and early spring. Prior to 2006, rotavirus was estimated to be responsible for up to 70,000 hospitalizations and approximately 250,000 emergency room visits among children under 5 years of age every year in the United States.

Parents can help protect their children from rotavirus disease through vaccination. Rotavirus vaccines are recommended for appropriate infants in the U.S. by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

A rotavirus vaccine, ROTATEQ® (Rotavirus Vaccine, Live, Oral, Pentavalent), is available in the U.S. This vaccine can help protect babies against common types of rotavirus. ROTATEQ is not a shot; it is a vaccine given by mouth in three doses. The first dose is given when your child is 6 to 12 weeks of age, the second dose is given 4 to 10 weeks after the first dose. The last (third) dose should be given by 32 weeks of age. ROTATEQ should not be given to infants who are allergic to any part of the vaccine.

"There are many things parents can do to help protect their infants from rotavirus disease," said Stan Shulman, M.D., professor of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and chief of infectious diseases at Children's Memorial Hospital, Chicago. "This includes talking to their child's doctor about rotavirus vaccination."

An important reason to vaccinate is to help protect babies



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against a severe case of rotavirus. In a large clinical trial, ROTATEQ demonstrated 98 percent efficacy against severe rotavirus gastroenteritis and 74 percent against rotavirus gastroenteritis of any severity through the first rotavirus season after vaccination. In addition, infants who were vaccinated with ROTATEQ were 94 percent less likely to visit an emergency room and 96 percent less likely to be hospitalized through the first two years after the third dose, due to the types of rotavirus targeted by the vaccine.

Common symptoms of rotavirus include vomiting, diarrhea and fever. Severity of rotavirus disease can be unpredictable. Many children with rotavirus infection show little or no symptoms, while some may experience severe, dehydrating diarrhea and vomiting.

### Important Select Safety Information

ROTATEQ should not be given to infants who are allergic to any part of the vaccine.

ROTATEQ may not fully protect all children who get the vaccine.

The most common side effects reported after taking ROTATEQ were diarrhea, vomiting, fever, runny nose and sore throat,

wheezing or coughing, and ear infection.

Other reported side effects include: hives, Kawasaki disease (a serious condition that can affect the heart, symptoms may include fever, rash, red eyes, red mouth, swollen glands, swollen hands and feet, and, if untreated, can be life threatening).

Call your child's doctor or go to the emergency department right away if, following any dose of ROTATEQ, your child has vomiting, diarrhea, severe stomach pain, blood in their stool or change in bowel movements. These may be signs of a serious and life-threatening problem called intussusception. Intussusception can happen even when no vaccine has been given and the cause is usually unknown. Contact your doctor or go to the emergency department right away if your child has any symptoms of intussusception, even if it has been several weeks since the last vaccine dose.

There are some important things your doctor needs to know about your baby. Tell your doctor if your baby is sick with fever, diarrhea or vomiting, or is not growing or gaining weight as expected. Tell your doctor if your baby or someone in regular close contact with your baby has a weakened immune system from a disease (such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, or a blood disorder) or from medicine (such as steroids). Also tell your doctor if your baby has received a blood transfusion or blood products recently or if he or she was born with gastrointestinal problems, had a blockage or had abdominal surgery.

Prescribing Information and Patient Product Information for ROTATEQ are attached, and are also available at [www.rotateq.com](http://www.rotateq.com).

This information is provided by Merck, the manufacturer of ROTATEQ.