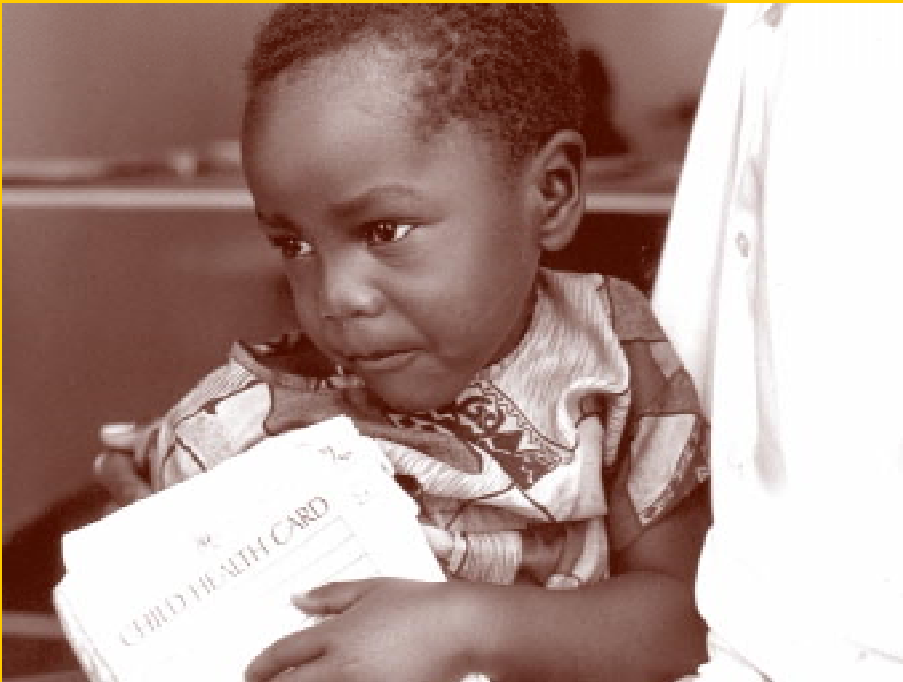





# Promotion of Immunisation in Uganda

Booklet for Leaders



June 2002



*“A healthy community is a  
result of good leadership”  
Immunisation promotes  
the health status of the  
community.*

*“As a responsible leader  
ensure that all children  
in your community  
are fully immunised  
on time.”*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special thanks go to UNICEF, WHO and DISH for the continued financial and material support that made this task a reality.

Technical contribution by the various non government organisations, line Ministries, and Ministry of Health departments deserve special mention and recognition.

## P R E F A C E

This booklet has been developed to provide basic information on immunisation for leaders to enable them mobilise their communities to promote and utilise immunisation services.

The booklet explains the importance of immunisation, the childhood immunisable diseases and the roles of community leaders in promoting immunisation services.

These community leaders include political, civic, traditional, religious, cultural and other opinion leaders.

## INTRODUCTION

The Immunisation Programme in Uganda has been in existence since 1983 and was re-launched in 1987 by his Excellency the President of Uganda. Leaders played a big role in mobilising their communities for immunisation services.

This resulted in the achievement of high immunisation coverage, which was maintained until mid-1990s. However, a stagnation in the immunisation coverage was observed followed by a downward trend since 1995.

In 2001, 63% of children under the age of 1 year had not completed the immunisation schedule while others had not had any immunisation at all.

This exposes our children to great risk of illness, disability and death due to eight childhood immunisable diseases (i.e. Polio, Measles, Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenzae type b and Whooping Cough).

In an effort to reverse the situation, the Ministry of Health has embarked on intensive community mobilisation to promote utilisation of immunisation services.

The success of immunisation services in this country greatly depends on the participation of leaders in mobilising their communities for these services. We ask you for your support in this effort.

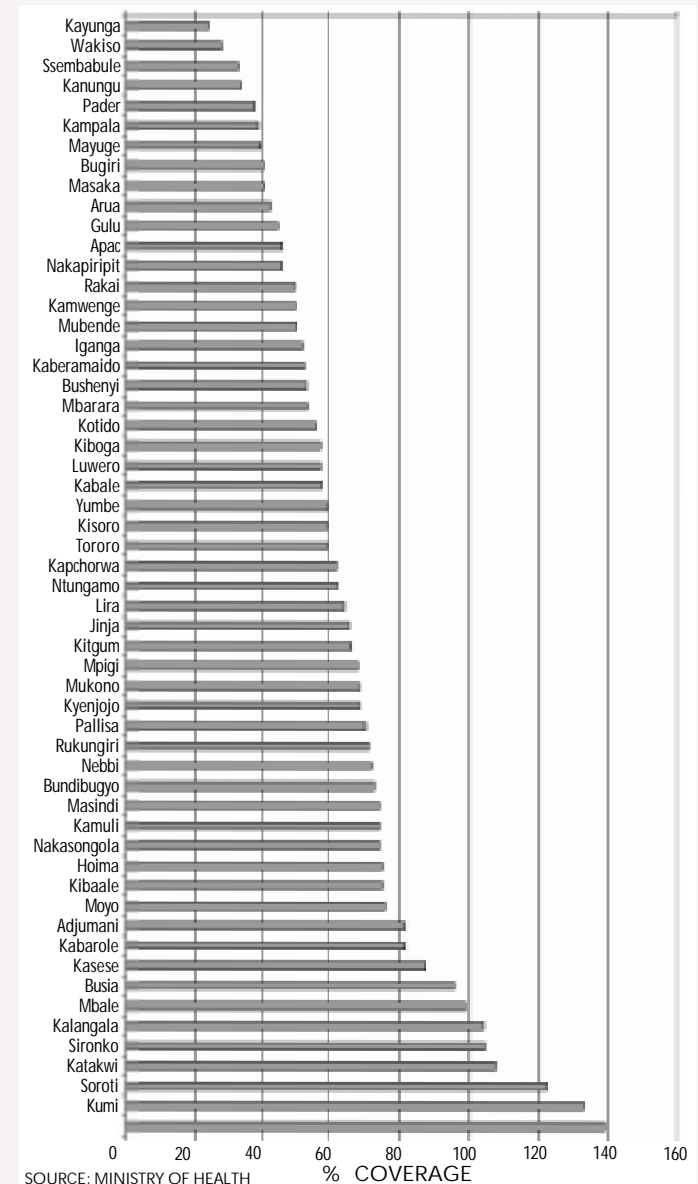
Immunisation is a right of every child.

## THE STATUS OF IMMUNISATION IN UGANDA

- A** The proportion of children who are fully immunised has been dropping since 1995, from 47% in 1995 to only 37% in 2001.
- B** Most children (84%) receive one round of immunisations, but only 37% receive all five rounds.
- C** As many as 63% of mothers do not know when their child needs his or her next immunisations.
- D** Because of good commitment by leaders and health workers, some districts have maintained high levels of immunisation, as shown by the graph on the next page.

## IMMUNISATION COVERAGE IN UGANDA, 2001

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN UNDER ONE WHO HAVE HAD 3 DOSES OF DPT BY DISTRICT



## 1. What is immunisation?

Immunisation is a means of protecting the human body against specific diseases by building up the body's defense system. This is done by giving vaccines either through injection or by mouth.

## 2. Benefits of immunisation.

- (i) Reduces suffering to child and family members due to ill health.
- (ii) Reduces disability and death to the child and burden to the parents, the community and the nation.
- (iii) Contributes to child's proper growth and development.
- (iv) Reduces costs in terms of time and money spent on treatment. This will contribute to socio-economic development.
- (v) Protects the entire community from these diseases.

## 3. When should immunisation be carried out?

### I) IMMUNISATION SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN IN UGANDA

AGE OF CHILD	VACCINE	DISEASES PREVENTED
At birth or soon after birth	Oral Polio, BCG	Polio and Tuberculosis
6 weeks old	Oral Polio, DPT-HepB+ Hib	Polio, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Tetanus, Hepatitis B & Haemophilus influenzae type b illnesses
10 weeks old	Oral Polio, DPT-HepB+ Hib	Polio, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Tetanus, Hepatitis B & Haemophilus influenzae type b illnesses
14 weeks old	Oral Polio, DPT-HepB+ Hib	Polio, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Tetanus, Hepatitis B & Haemophilus influenzae type b illnesses
9 months old	Measles	Measles
VITAMIN A SUPPLEMENTATION		
6 months old and every 6 months until 5 years	Vitamin A drops in the mouth	Prevents blindness and strengthens resistance against other diseases

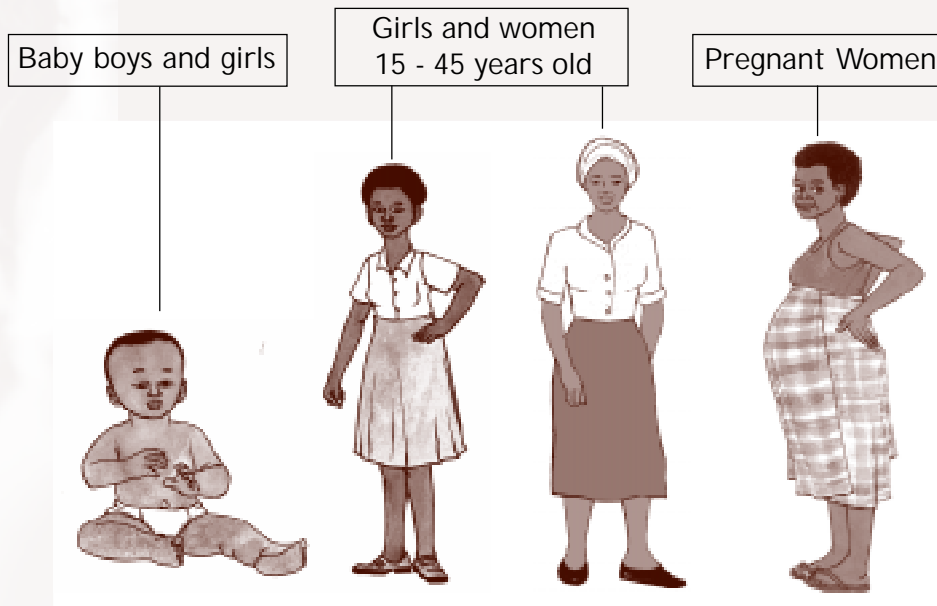
### II) IMMUNISATION SCHEDULE FOR WOMEN FOR TETANUS TOXOID (TT)

Girls and women 15-45 years old and pregnant women	VACCINE	DISEASE PREVENTED
First visit	TT1	Tetanus
At least 4 weeks after TT1	TT2	Tetanus
At least 6 months after TT2	TT3	Tetanus
At least 1 year after TT3	TT4	Tetanus
At least 1 year after TT4	TT5	Tetanus

#### 4. Who should be immunised?

- ▣ All children below 1 year.
- ▣▣ All women of child-bearing age including pregnant women.

Immunisation is given to all girls and women 15-45 years old and pregnant women to protect them and their new born babies against Tetanus.



#### 5. How is immunisation carried out?

- ▣▣ Polio vaccine is administered by putting drops in the mouth of the baby while all other vaccines are given by injections.

#### 6. Why is it important to immunise?

When most children are fully immunised, the entire community is protected from these 8 diseases, because the germs cannot easily find anyone to infect.

Many of these 8 diseases are deadly and cannot be treated easily. Neonatal Tetanus, for example, is almost always fatal. Yet immunisation can prevent it.

Once a child is fully immunised, he or she is protected against these 8 diseases.

## 7. What diseases are immunised against?

- Children are immunised against eight childhood killer diseases which include:



Poliomyelitis (Polio)



Tuberculosis (TB)



Diphtheria



Measles



Tetanus



Whooping Cough



Hepatitis B (liver disease)



Haemophilus influenzae type b illnesses (Meningitis and Pneumonia)

- In addition, girls and women 15-45 years old and pregnant women are immunised against Tetanus.

## Poliomyelitis (Polio)

What is Polio?

Polio is a disease which is characterised by weakness of the limbs especially of the legs. It is caused by a virus. Children get it by taking in water and food contaminated by faecal matter, containing the Polio virus.

How can one tell a child has Polio?

- Polio is a sickness that begins with a mild cold.
- Some children may develop weakness in one or more limbs which progresses to lameness and thinness of the affected limbs.
- Sometimes Polio can affect the lungs and the child will stop breathing and die.

How can Polio be prevented?

- Polio can be prevented by immunising the child with Polio vaccine 4 times. (*see page 7*)
- Additional doses of Polio vaccine to all children below 5 years during National Immunisation Days (NIDs) will eradicate Polio disease from your community.
- Use of safe water, washing hands before handling food and after using the toilet or latrine.



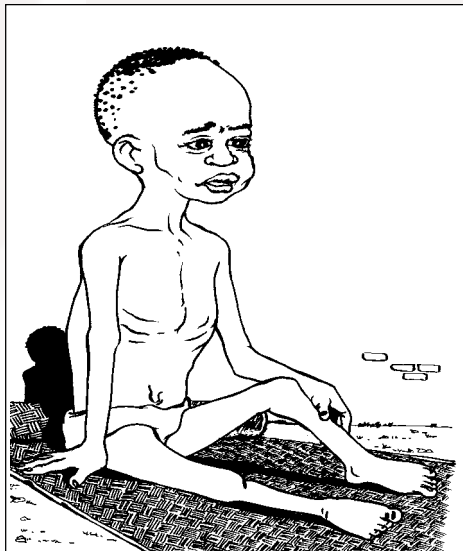
## Tuberculosis

What is Tuberculosis (TB)?

This is a disease caused by a bacteria, characterised by fever, cough and weight loss. Most children get the infection from infected adults. It is spread through air especially where one is near an infected person.

How can one tell a child has TB?

- A child has prolonged cough of more than 2 weeks
- A child has no appetite and loses weight



How can TB be prevented?

- TB can be prevented by immunising a child with BCG vaccine at birth.
- Proper feeding (balanced diet).
- Children should not mix with infected people.
- Live in well ventilated houses.
- Cover your mouth when coughing to avoid spreading the disease.

## Whooping Cough

What is Whooping Cough?

This is a disease characterised by long coughing spells sometimes followed by a whoop and sometimes followed by vomiting. Whooping Cough is caused by a bacteria. It is spread through air by other infected children.

How can one tell a child has Whooping Cough?

A child with Whooping Cough has a long lasting cough with a whooping sound, running nose, fever, and vomiting.



How can Whooping Cough be prevented?

- This disease is prevented by immunising a child with combined DPT-HepB+Hib vaccine three times before the age of one year. This prevents Whooping Cough as well as 4 other diseases.
- By living in a well ventilated house.
- Covering one's mouth when coughing to avoid spreading the disease.



## Diphtheria

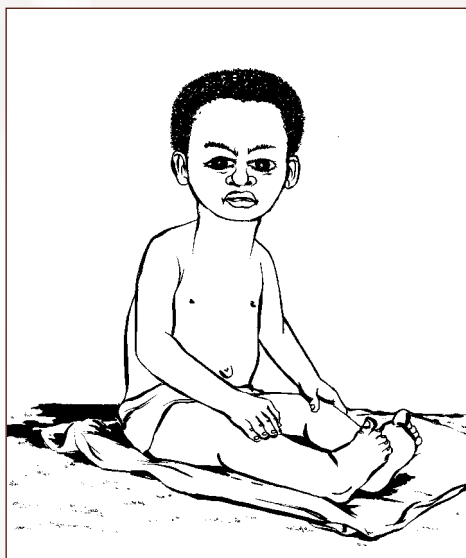
What is Diphtheria?

This is a disease of the throat characterised by sore throat, swelling of the neck, mild fever, hoarseness, difficulty in swallowing and breathing.

It is caused by a bacteria. The child gets it by breathing in droplets from an infected child.

How can one tell a child has Diphtheria?

A child with Diphtheria has a sore throat, mild fever, swelling of the neck, and difficulty in breathing.



How can Diphtheria be prevented?

- Diphtheria can be prevented by immunising a child with combined DPT-HepB+Hib vaccine three times before the age of 1 year. This prevents Diphtheria as well as 4 other diseases.
- Living in a well ventilated house.
- Covering mouth when coughing to avoid spreading the disease.

## Measles

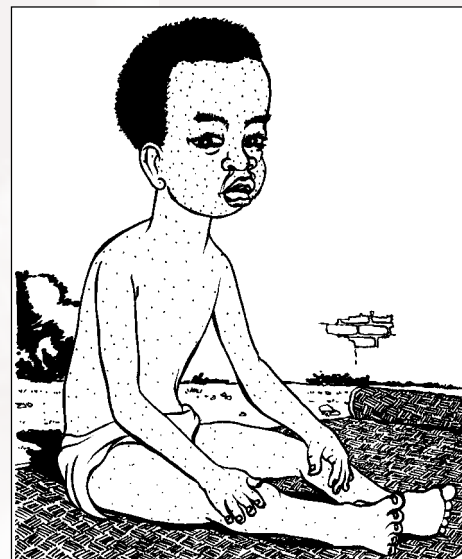
What is Measles?

Measles is a disease characterised by a generalised body rash, high fever, running nose, and red and watery eyes lasting at least 3 days.

Measles is caused by a virus. It is spread by breathing in droplets from an infected child.

How can one tell a child has Measles?

A child with measles has a generalised body rash, high body temperature, red watery eyes, running nose, sores in the mouth and a dry cough.



How can Measles be prevented?

- Measles can be prevented by immunising all children with measles vaccine at 9 months of age.
- Additional doses of Measles vaccine to all children younger than 15 years during mass Measles campaigns will eliminate Measles from your community.

## Neonatal Tetanus

What is Neonatal Tetanus?

Neonatal Tetanus is a disease seen as muscle spasms (muscle contractions) and failure to breastfeed by a baby who was born healthy. It is caused by a bacteria. Tetanus can also affect adults.

How can one tell a child has Neonatal Tetanus?

A child with Neonatal Tetanus is born normally, but after a few days stops breastfeeding and gets a locked jaw and stiff muscles all over the body especially when touched.

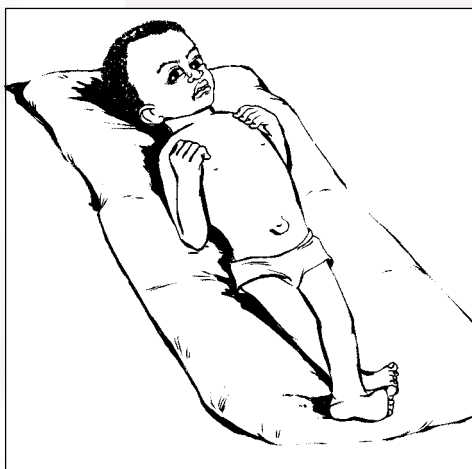
How does a child get Neonatal Tetanus?

A new born child gets Tetanus through the umbilical cord. This occurs when the cord is cut with contaminated instruments, tied with a contaminated string, rubbed with contaminated soil, ashes, or animal dung or delivered in a dirty environment.

Older children and adults can get Tetanus from deep cuts or wounds that get dirt in them.

How can Neonatal Tetanus be prevented?

- Neonatal Tetanus can be prevented by immunising all women of child bearing age and pregnant mothers with TT vaccine, and using a sterile instrument to cut the umbilical cord.



- Delivering a child in clean environment (Tetanus germ free environment) — at a health facility with a trained health worker.
- Immunising all children under one year three times with combined DPT-HepB+Hib vaccine protects them from Tetanus later in life. It also protects against 4 other diseases.

## Hepatitis B

What is Hepatitis B (Hep B)?

Hepatitis B is a serious disease of the liver and is caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV) which usually exists in the blood and bodily fluids of the infected person.

Hepatitis B virus causes chronic infections that lead to liver damage (cirrhosis), liver cancer and death. There is no cure for Hepatitis B Virus illnesses.

Children get it through cuts, casual contact and from their mothers at birth. Hepatitis B is also spread through blood transfusions, unsafe injections, and sexual contact (adults) with an infected person.

How can one tell a child has Hepatitis B (Hep B)?

- In children, no signs or symptoms are usually seen, but infected children remain infected for many years and can spread the infection to others.
- Usually, the effects of Hepatitis B appear during adulthood as yellow skin and eyes, weight loss, vomiting and weakness. Over time, Hepatitis causes coma and death. Many people become infected with Hepatitis B during childhood, and carry the disease into adulthood.



How can Hepatitis B (Hep B) be prevented?

- Through immunising all children below one year 3 times with combined DPT-HepB+Hib vaccine. Three injections prevent Hepatitis B and 4 other diseases.
- Immunisation in childhood protects the child from Hepatitis B for at least 10 years.

## PRIME MESSAGES

- Immunisation protects children against 8 killer vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Immunisation should be completed in the 1st year of a child's life with 5 rounds of immunisation.
- The vaccines are safe, effective and free; and they are available at government and non-government health facilities.
- It is safe to immunise a sick child.
- Child Health Cards should be kept and taken to the health unit every time the child visits, even if he or she is sick.
- Additional doses of vaccines during special immunisation campaigns strengthen children's immunity against diseases. Support special immunisation campaigns in your area.
- Remember to take the child for Vitamin A when he is 6 months old and then after every 6 months until he is 5 years old. Vitamin A helps children fight diseases and prevents blindness.
- Leaders should keep updated records on children who have been immunised in their area.



This booklet provides basic information  
on immunisation for leaders to enable  
them to mobilise their communities  
to utilise immunisation services.

For further information contact the nearest Health Centre



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