

BCG Vaccine Information

The BCG vaccine is provided to children for protection against tuberculosis. This guide helps you understand what might happen and how to take care of the injection site. The BCG is given in the upper left arm. There are some common/normal side effects, as well as rare side effects.

Common Reactions

After the vaccine, your child may have:

- A small red bump at the injection site.
- A small sore that appears a few weeks later.
- A scar that forms once the sore heals, which can take several months.
- There may be no visible reaction at the injection site.

How to Take Care of the Injection Site

- Keep the area clean and dry.
- Bathing is fine—just pat the area dry afterward.
- If the site oozes, or becomes itchy, a dry gauze dressing may help.
- A sterile alcohol swab can be used for wiping if needed but avoid excessive cleaning.
- Do not use ointments, antiseptic creams, band-aids, moisturiser or plasters.

Rare Side Effects

In some very rare cases, children may experience:

- A large pus-filled lump at the injection site (large local reaction).
- Swelling or tenderness in the left armpit or neck due to enlarged glands.
- Noticeable scarring (keloid scars).
- A severe allergic reaction (very rare).

When to Seek Medical Advice

Please let us know if:

- The injection site has a large, discharging abscess that does not heal after 6 months.
- The glands in the left armpit or neck become swollen and tender.
- A large reaction is noted within 7 days after BCG.

Who to Contact for Advice

- The Kids Travel Doc team.
- Your General Practitioner.
- Victorian Vaccine Safety Service (SAEFVIC).

Normal BCG Ulcer/Blister



BCG Scar

