

Preparation for catch up vaccination for Ukrainian people displaced by war - a descriptive piece

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Background

Since February 2022, a war in Ukraine has resulted in millions of people being displaced from their homes. It is anticipated that tens of thousands of Ukrainian people will be rehoused in Ireland, in accommodation ranging from private family homes to larger venues, including hotels.

The HSE National Immunisation Office (NIO) is developing a suite of information for people from Ukraine and for health care professionals (HCPs) to encourage vaccine uptake. This descriptive piece aims to outline the challenges to the roll out of the vaccination programme, the recommended catch up schedule for vaccinations and the materials developed for the public and HCPs to support vaccinating Ukrainian people.

Why are vaccines so important for Ukrainian people displaced by war?

- Living conditions during transit or upon arrival increase the risk of infection transmission.
- Exposure to nutritional stress and temperature extremes may exacerbate vulnerability.
- Vaccine coverage is sub-optimal in Ukraine, both for routine childhood immunisations and for COVID-19 vaccines, with some of the lowest uptake rates in Europe.

Challenges

- Large numbers of Ukrainians entering Ireland, unpredictable rate of entry.
- Mobility of the cohort. May be registered in one community health organization (CHO) and be moved to another CHO overnight.
- No national immunisation system to record vaccinations administered.
- GPs may not have the capacity to administer catch up vaccines to large numbers of people.
- Vaccine hesitancy amongst the cohort due to documented baseline hesitancy amongst Ukrainian people.
- Dissemination of information to both Ukrainian people themselves and to HCPs in Ireland.
- Translation of documents into Ukrainian and Russian in a timely manner.

Catch up vaccination of Ukrainian people in Ireland

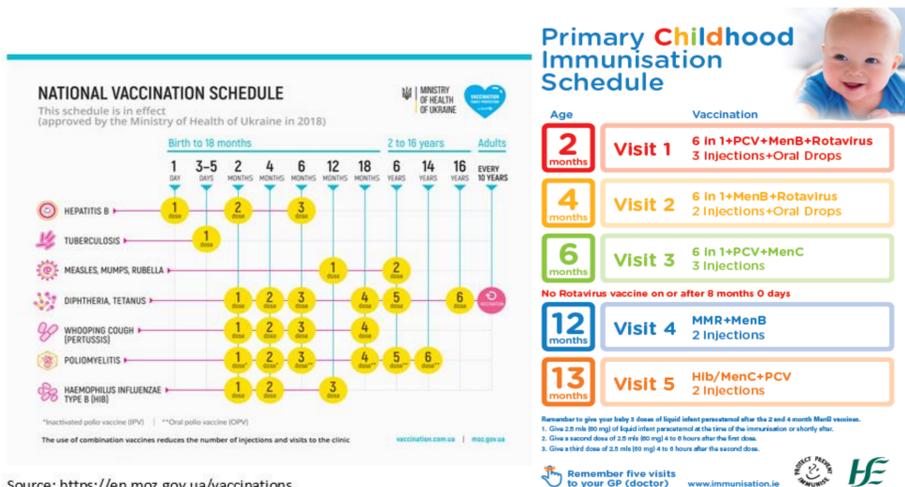


Figure 1. Ukrainian primary immunisation schedule Figure 2. Irish primary immunisation schedule

The majority of Ukrainian children are vaccinated, although the vaccine uptake rate is below 90% for most vaccines.

- The World Health Organization (WHO) reports an uptake of 85% for MMR1¹ and 80% for DTP3².
- The RCPI National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) recommends that Ukrainian people coming into Ireland should be vaccinated as per the Irish vaccination schedule.
- Babies and infants less than 2 years who are fully vaccinated according to the Ukrainian schedule (Figure 1) require pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV), Meningitis B (Men B) and Meningitis C (Men C) to catch-up to the Irish schedule.
- Babies less than 8 months 0 days require the Rotavirus vaccine.

Catch up schedule for unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated children and adults

- The WHO is monitoring recent outbreaks of Polio and Measles in Ukraine due to the war and low vaccination rates¹.
- The following schedules (Figure 3 and 4) should be followed for unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated children and adults:

Vaccine	4 months to <12 months	1 to <2 years	2-<4 years
DTaP/IPV/ HepB/Hib ² 6 in 1	3 doses ≥8 weeks apart	3 doses ≥8 weeks apart ²	3 doses ≥8 weeks apart ^{1,2}
MenB	2 doses ≥8 weeks apart (if aged ≥ 10 months give 1 dose and a booster at ≥ 12 months 8 weeks after the first dose)	2 doses ≥8 weeks apart	
PCV	2 doses ≥8 weeks apart	1 dose	
Rotavirus ³	2 doses 8 weeks apart (No dose after 8 months 0 days)		
MenC ⁴	1 dose	1 dose	1 dose
MMR		1 dose	1 dose
NOTE	Continue with routine childhood immunisation schedule from 12 months	Routine school immunisations DTaP/IPV at least 6 months and preferably 3 years after primary course MMR2 ≥1 month after MMR1	

Vaccine	4 to <10 years	10 to <18 years	18 years and older
DTaP/IPV/ HepB/Hib ² 6 in 1	3 doses ≥8 weeks apart ^{1,2}		
MenC ⁴	1 dose	1 dose up to 23 years of age, if Men C containing vaccine not given at age ≥10years	1 dose up to 23 years of age, if Men C containing vaccine not given at age ≥10years
MMR	2 doses ≥28 days apart ⁵	2 doses ≥28 days apart	2 doses ≥28 days apart ⁶
Tdap/IPV		3 doses ≥28 days apart	1 dose ⁷
Td/IPV			2 doses ≥28 days apart – leave ≥28 day gap after Tdap/IPV vaccine
NOTE	Tdap/IPV as school immunisation at least 6 months and preferably 3 years after primary course and MMR2 ≥ 1 month after MMR1	Booster of Tdap/IPV 5 years after primary course; Tdap 10 years later	

Figure 3. Catch up schedule for unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated children aged 4 months to <4 years. Figure 4. Catch up schedule for unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated children aged 4 years and older. Source: Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland. Available at <http://bit.ly/NIACCh2>

Resources



Immunisation.ie

- <https://bit.ly/NIOUkraine> (or scan the QR code)
- Repository of information available to support immunising children and adults from Ukraine. Contains information in Ukrainian, Russian and English on:
 - The approach to immunisation for a child from Ukraine attending healthcare.
 - Materials to support HCPs in providing vaccines, including medicine protocols, consent forms and clinical information.
 - Handbook with information for HCPs on catch-up vaccination (Figure 5).
 - COVID-19 vaccination.
 - The Primary Immunisation schedule.
 - The Schools Immunisation programme.
 - Vaccines for pregnant women.



Figure 5. Information for HCPs on catch-up vaccination

Training materials

There is a need to train HSE clinical staff to administer catch up vaccinations that are usually carried out in General Practice.

NIO worked with Public Health, the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD) and CHOs to develop training materials for www.hseland.ie covering catch up vaccination. Learners must also complete:

- HSE Immunisation Foundation Programme
- Primary Childhood Immunisation programme
- Schools Immunisation programme

Resources for the public

The HSE NIO worked with Ukrainian GPs and a Ukrainian Paediatrician to develop information for the public. These include:

- Leaflets in Ukrainian, Russian, English and Irish regarding the Irish immunisation schedule.
- Frequently asked questions in Ukrainian, Russian, English and Irish.
- YouTube video designed to appeal to Ukrainian people arriving in Ireland and their children.

Further resources

Prevention and control of infectious diseases in the context of Russia's aggression towards Ukraine. Available at: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/prevention-and-control-infectious-diseases-context-russias-aggression-towards-ukraine>
Provision of immunization services to refugees: guidance for host countries in the context of mass population movement from Ukraine. March 2022. Available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/352373>

References

- <https://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/sections/press-releases/2022/ukraine-immEDIATE-steps-needed-to-prevent-a-measles-outbreak-due-to-the-ongoing-war-and-low-vaccination-rates,-warns-who>
- <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/ukraine-emergency/publications-and-technical-guidance/ukraine-crisis,-public-health-situation-analysis-refugee-hosting-countries,-17-march-2022>