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Few come for second vaccine dose

Risha Chitlangia | TNN

New Delhi: Every year, a large number of children get vaccinated for diseases like pertussis, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, measles etc as part of the national immunization programme.

But very few of them go on to complete the full course losing track of further booster doses that are administered at 10 and 16 years of age. The lack of awareness among parents are to blame for the low turnout rate.

Doctors say that most children don't get mandatory booster dose for tetanus at the age of 10 and 16. "If it's given, he or she can develop immunity for life. It would also bring down indiscriminate use of tetanus. But we don't see many turning up for booster dose at 10 and 16 years of age," said Dr Bir Singh, professor community medicine, AIIMS.

Similarly, the incidence of pertussis (whooping cough), which is a contagious disease caused by bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*, is rising among children in the 10-plus age-group. The national immunization programme recommends booster dose for diphtheria and tetanus at the age of 5 years.

"These days we are seeing a lot of pertussis cases in children above the age of 10. With

the passage of time, the effect of the vaccine decreases. That is why booster doses of DPT (diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus) are required at the age of 10 to replenish the immune system," said Dr Pankaj Garg, consultant, neo-natol-

ogy, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

Doctors say that the national immunization programme is religiously followed for children up to two years.

"Till 24 months, vaccines are given at an interval of 2

to 3 months. So, parents are regular. But when we ask them to come after two or four years, their turnout is dismal," said Dr Sisir Paul, senior consultant, paediatrician, Max Healthcare.

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TIME FOR FOLLOW-UP BOOSTER

A number of diseases are covered under the national immunization programme, but doctors say that follow-up rate of booster doses, especially given at 10 & 16 years of age, is very poor in India

Optional vaccines

H influenza (type B)
Against flu
Administered at | 6, 10, 14 weeks
Booster dose at | 18 mths

Hepatitis A
Against water-borne diseases
Administered at | 12 mths
Booster dose at | 18 mths

Chicken pox
Administered at | 1 yr
Booster dose at | 10 yrs

Pneumococcal vaccine
Against pneumonia
Administered at 6, 14, 20 weeks

Typhoid (VI)
Administered at | 2 yrs
Booster dose at Every 3 yrs*

Meningococcal
Against meningitis
Administered at | 2 yrs
Booster dose at Every 3 yrs*
*(until 18 years of age)

IMMUNIZATION ROUTINE

Primary vaccination

Bacillus Calmette-Guérin
Vaccine against tuberculosis
Administered at Birth

Oral polio
Vaccine against polio
Administered at Birth, 6, 10, 14 weeks



DPT
Vaccine against diphtheria, pertussis & tetanus
Administered at 6, 10, 14 weeks

Hepatitis B
Against blood-borne disease
Administered at Birth, 6, 10, 14 weeks

Measles vaccine
Administered at 9-12 months

BOOSTER DOSES

DPT & oral polio
16-24 months

DT
5 yrs (doctors recommend DPT booster dose at 10 years of age)

Tetanus Toxoid (TT)
At 10 years & again at 16 years

Vitamin A
9, 18, 24, 30 & 36 months after birth of the infant