

Information for those who have chosen to decline vaccination on behalf of their child

- Unvaccinated children are at risk of being infected with diseases such as whooping cough (pertussis), tetanus and measles. These contagious diseases can be prevented through the national childhood vaccination program, aiming to prevent serious illness and disabilities. The risk of infection increases at gatherings in kindergartens and when children participate in sport events, camps, school meetings and concerts. Travelling with unvaccinated children also represent a risk of infection regardless of destination and means of transport.

- An unvaccinated child may infect others with vaccine-preventable diseases. Particularly sensitive are infants and people with immune deficiencies.

- **In case of acute illness it is very important to tell healthcare professionals that the child is unvaccinated, as certain measures or treatments may be urgent (see below regarding tetanus prevention).**

Information for the unvaccinated child

It is recommended that parents make a notation of, and eventually inform the child, that he or she is unvaccinated. Otherwise there is a risk that the child later in life believes to be vaccinated because "everyone else" is and, for example, travel abroad without being aware of the risks of infection.

How can tetanus be prevented in unvaccinated children?

When an unvaccinated child is at risk of tetanus infection, parents need to know how to act without delay.

Tetanus is a serious wound infection caused by a bacterium found in soil and manure throughout the world. Without treatment, tetanus infection often leads to death. In Sweden, occasional cases of tetanus occur among unvaccinated people, especially elderly.

Tetanus infection may occur as a result of seemingly insignificant wounds following animal bites, animal scratches or wounds that occur during play or work in gardens and parks. Therefore, it is recommended that infants are vaccinated against tetanus before starting to play outdoors.

If an unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated child suffers from a wound injury or an animal bite, the child should be assessed immediately (the same day) at an emergency department. The physician assesses, among other things, if immunoglobulin directed against tetanus bacteria is to be given and if vaccination against tetanus should be initiated.

Caution information in the child's medical record

For the child's safety, we make a notation of vaccination status (unvaccinated) in the medical record. The information will be altered in case of subsequent vaccination.

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