



**INFORMATION ON VACCINATION
AGAINST DIPHTHERIA, TETANUS, PERTUSSIS AND POLIO
with Repevax®**

Dear parents or guardians,

In its current vaccination recommendations, the Austrian Health Council has again emphasised the importance of vaccination against diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (whooping cough) and polio. Every person should be protected by vaccination against these four diseases. As the level of protection against the individual diseases provided by vaccination decreases over time, initial immunisation in infancy and early childhood should be followed by booster vaccines at school age and later every 5 years.

Diphtheria is a highly contagious, sometimes life-threatening disease caused by a bacterium and its toxins. In most cases, it is spread from person to person through respiratory droplets from speaking, sneezing or coughing. The most common type is pharyngeal (throat) diphtheria which is characterised by greyish-white membranes covering the tonsils. If untreated, diphtheria can have serious complications which may cause permanent damage to the nerves, heart muscle and kidneys. The disease can also be fatal. In Austria, the disease is very rare, but it can be reintroduced at any time, because it is still present in countries with low immunisation levels.

Tetanus is a serious disease of the nervous system caused by the toxin of the tetanus bacterium. Tetanus bacteria are present worldwide and are found in dust, dirt, soil and horse, sheep and cow manure. Tetanus bacteria usually enter the body through open wounds or injuries of all kinds. The disease leads to muscle spasms and muscle stiffness all over the body. Life-threatening complications include spasms of the respiratory muscles that may interfere with breathing. Despite current treatment options, 20% to 30% of people who get tetanus will die from it.

Whooping cough (pertussis) can occur at any age. However, the disease is particularly dangerous for babies and is characterised by bouts of intense coughing. In older children and adults, whooping cough often only causes a persistent cough without the typical coughing fits, while elderly people may again experience coughing fits during the night. Complications include middle ear infections, bronchitis and pneumonia; in babies the disease may also be fatal. Whooping cough is spread through droplet transmission. Since protection from vaccination or from past infection only lasts for a few years, protection levels should be kept high by regular booster vaccinations. This will also help to protect babies who have not been fully vaccinated and unprotected elderly people against an infection.

Please turn over – Thank you!

Polio (poliomyelitis) is a serious viral disease that can be accompanied by a fever and can cause irreversible paralysis. It is spread mainly through faecal-oral transmission. Thanks to the vaccination, the disease is no longer present in Austria. However, it still exists in some African and Asian countries with low immunisation levels and can be reintroduced at any time. In this case, unvaccinated people can contract the disease.

The vaccine contains detoxified bacterial toxins of the tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis bacteria and components of the pertussis bacterium as well as inactivated poliomyelitis viruses. After vaccination, the human body produces antibodies which prevent the onset of the disease in the case of infection.

Side effects

Like other medicines, vaccines can also cause unwanted side effects. Together with this information sheet, you will also receive the patient leaflet for the vaccine, which contains information about its composition, possible contraindications and side effects. Please report any reactions and side effects, especially such which are not listed in the patient leaflet, to your doctor immediately.

PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILD BRING ALL VACCINATION DOCUMENTS

(health passport, vaccination passport, vaccination card)

This will help the doctor to check which vaccine your child needs.

THANK YOU!