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Public Health Advisory

Changes to Infant Screening and TB Immunization

September 8, 2020
Nunavut-wide **45 sec**

Effective September 1, 2020, changes to Nunavut's routine immunization program and infant screening process were made to help better protect the health of Nunavut's newborns.

Newborns will now receive the Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine at one month of age instead of at birth to allow time for infants to be screened for Severe Combined Immunodeficiency (SCID).

SCID is a group of rare genetic conditions that affects the body's ability to fight off infections.

The BCG vaccine helps protect infants and young children from the most severe types of tuberculosis (TB). If an infant with SCID is given the BCG vaccine, there is a risk of potentially severe TB infection.

The change in immunization schedule reduces this risk, ensuring that the BCG vaccine will only be given after it is determined that the infant is negative for SCID. SCID screening is done alongside existing routine tests for newborns, performed before the infant is discharged from the hospital.

Contact your local community health centre or public health office for more information.

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