



FOR RELEASE
October 2, 2012

Yukon immunization program expands to include new infant vaccine

WHITEHORSE—Yukon's Immunization Program is expanding to include rotavirus for infants.

"This is a very common infection that can cause severe diarrhea and vomiting in infants and young children," Health and Social Services Minister Doug Graham said in announcing the change. "About 95 out of every 100 children will have at least one rotavirus infection before they reach the age of five years and while it's not life threatening, it is very contagious."

The minister said Yukon's immunization program helps protect infants and children, as well as youth and adults against a variety of diseases. The rotavirus vaccine, he said, has the potential to virtually eliminate rotavirus as a cause of childhood diarrhea.

For the best protection, infants should receive two doses of the vaccine, one at two months and the other at four months. This vaccine is given orally and is not injected.

"There is nothing more distressing than a sick infant," Chief Medical Officer of Health Brendan Hanley said. "Rotavirus infection can last from three to eight days and can make children quite ill with fever, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain, and some infants will have to be hospitalized to treat dehydration."

The vaccine will be offered routinely through well baby check-ups. Parents seeking more information can contact their local health centre or visit www.hss.gov.yk.ca/pdf/immunization_rotavirus_en.pdf.

-30-

Contact:

Elaine Schiman
Cabinet Communications
867-633-7961
elaine.schiman@gov.yk.ca

Pat Living
Communications, Health & Social Services
867-667-3673
patricia.living@gov.yk.ca

News Release #12-183



Stay up to date with the latest Yukon government news by subscribing to our RSS feed here: <http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/rss.html>. Or follow us on Twitter @yukongov.