

MenC vaccination programme – information for parents about changes

From 1st July 2016, the schedule for meningococcal C (MenC) vaccination is changing.

MenC is a serious illness caused by the C strains of meningococcal bacteria. Due to the success of the MenC vaccination programme there are now almost no cases of MenC disease in infants or young children in the UK. Vaccine programmes are regularly monitored and adapted to ensure they give your baby the best protection, when they need it most. All children will continue to be offered a combined Hib/MenC vaccine when they reach 12 – 13 months. This, along with the adolescent MenACWY vaccination, will help to provide protection against MenC across all age groups including infants and children.

What do I need to do now ?

You don't need to do anything the changes to the MenC programme will automatically take place on 1st July 2016. MenC vaccine has worked so well that your baby will now get their first dose (with Hib) from their first birthday.

What vaccines will my baby have to help protect against meningitis?

Your baby should have their routine immunisations such as Hib, pneumococcal and MenB vaccines at eight, twelve and sixteen weeks of age and they should have their Hib/MenC vaccine and further doses of MenB and pneumococcal at 12 – 13 months of age.

Be aware, be prepared

Meningitis (inflammation of the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning) can be caused by different infections so you need to make sure that you are aware of the signs and symptoms of these diseases.

Early warning signs - You should get medical help or call an ambulance immediately if you suspect meningitis or septicaemia. Trust your instincts. Symptoms include high fever and any of the following::

pain in the muscles, joints or limbs, such as in the hands or legs	rapid or unusual patterns of breathing
unusually cold hands and feet, or shivering	confusion and or headache
pale or blotchy skin and blue lips refusing feeds, vomiting	spots or a rash that does not fade under pressure
feeling drowsy and not responding to you, or being difficult to wake	convulsions/seizures (fits)
being floppy and having no energy, or being stiff with jerky movements	a bulging fontanelle (the soft patch on the top of the baby's head)
being irritable when picked up	a stiff neck
grunting or a high-pitched moaning cry	disliking bright lights

Symptoms can occur in any order and some may not appear at all.

If you are concerned about your baby at any time, then trust your instincts and speak to your GP or Nurse or call NHS Direct Wales 24 hours on 0845 04647.

Further information with a full description of the symptoms of meningitis is available on the NHS Direct Wales website: <http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/m/article/meningitis/#Symptoms>

You can also find more information advice and support at:

Meningitis Research Foundation Free helpline 080 8800 3344 www.meningitis.org

Meningitis Now Helpline from 9am to midnight 0808 80 10 388 www.meningitisnow.org

