

# New Men B and ACWY vaccines - update to routine vaccination schedule 2015



From this summer, additional vaccines will be added to the routine schedule; providing protection against some types of meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal disease is a life-threatening infection. It is a term used to describe two major illnesses – meningitis (inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning). These can occur on their own or more commonly both together. Most people will make a good recovery, but at worst meningococcal disease causes severe illness which can rapidly result in death.

There are five main groups of meningococcal bacteria that commonly cause disease; A, B, C, W and Y.

## Meningococcal group B (Men B)

**Men B** is the most common cause of bacterial meningitis in the UK. Men B vaccine will help to protect infants under the age of one year who are most at risk, with numbers of cases peaking around 5 or 6 months of age.

**Men B** is a new vaccine and will be added to the childhood immunisation programme from **1st September 2015**. Men B vaccine will be offered at GP appointments alongside other routine vaccines and parents will be contacted in the usual way.

## Schedule

The vaccine will be offered to babies aged **2 months**, with a second dose at **4 months** and a booster at **12 months**.

There will be a limited **catch-up programme** for babies who are due their **3 and 4 month** vaccinations in September, so they are also protected when they are most at risk of Men B infection.



A list of frequently asked questions about the Men B vaccine can be found on our website:

[www.meningitisnow.org/menbinfo](http://www.meningitisnow.org/menbinfo)



## Meningococcal ACWY (Men ACWY)

The five main groups of meningococcal bacteria that commonly cause disease are groups **A, B, C, W** and **Y**. Groups A (Men A) and Y (Men Y) are rare in the UK. Group C (Men C) has declined since the Men C vaccine was introduced in 2000. Group B (Men B) currently causes the most disease in the UK – the Men B vaccine will be introduced in September.

Meningococcal group W (**Men W**) has historically been rare in the UK but since 2009, year on year, cases of Men W have increased and continue to do so. A particularly aggressive strain of Men W is causing disease in all age groups, but there has been a significant increase in teenagers and young adults.

As the name suggests, the **Men ACWY** vaccine will offer protection against the four groups of meningococcal bacteria A, C, W and Y.

Teenagers are more likely to carry meningococcal bacteria in the back of their throats. Giving a vaccine to 14 – 18 year olds and new university students will directly protect this age group and reduce the chance of the bacteria spreading to others.

The vaccine is particularly important for those preparing to head off to university as they are at greatest risk of infection, this can be due to high carriage rates while in close contact in shared accommodation like halls of residence.

**Men ACWY** vaccine programme will begin in **August 2015**.

## Schedule

**17 – 18 year olds** (school year 13) and **older university entrants** (aged 19 – 25) will be offered one dose of the vaccine in **primary care (GP)**. The same age groups will also be offered the vaccine in 2016 and 2017.

From **spring 2016** the **Men ACWY** will replace **Men C**, which is currently offered to year 9 or 10 (depending on local arrangements). This school-based programme will also provide a catch-up to include pupils in **year 11 (15 and 16 year olds)**.



A list of frequently asked questions about the Men W and the Men ACWY vaccine can be found on our website:

[www.meningitisnow.org/menwinfo](http://www.meningitisnow.org/menwinfo)

The introduction of these two vaccines will help prevent disease cause by the most common groups of meningococcal disease. **However there are still other types and causes of meningitis and septicaemia, so knowing the signs and symptoms to look out for is still vital.**

**Meningitis Helpline 0808 80 10 388**

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[www.meningitisnow.org](http://www.meningitisnow.org)

At time of production, this information is for England and Scotland only.

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