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# Protecting young people from meningitis C



## What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an infection of the covering of the brain. The same germs that cause meningitis can also cause septicaemia (blood poisoning). Meningitis and septicaemia are both very serious and can cause permanent disability and death. The MenC vaccine protects against one of the causes, meningococcal C infection.

## Why should I get the MenC vaccine?

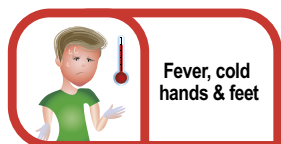
MenC vaccine has been given routinely to all children in the UK for many years and, as a result, cases of MenC disease have now become very rare.

MenC vaccine given to a baby protects for a few years but this does not last. A booster dose is needed as a teenager to give protection until you are an adult.

The MenC vaccine only protects against one cause of meningitis and septicaemia. There are other causes, so you still need to know the signs and symptoms to look out for.

These include:

## Children and Adults



Fever, cold hands & feet



Pale, blotchy skin.  
Spots/rash



Vomiting



Severe headache



Drowsy, difficult to wake



Stiff neck



Confusion & irritability



Dislike bright lights



Severe muscle pain



Convulsions/  
seizures

Source: MeningitisTrust [www.meningitis-trust.org/](http://www.meningitis-trust.org/)

*Remember – symptoms do not appear in order and some may not appear at all. If you are in doubt seek medical help immediately.*

## **When is the MenC vaccine offered?**

All babies are offered a dose of MenC vaccine at 3 months of age and a further dose when they are 12-13 months old.

From September 2013 a dose of MenC vaccine is also offered at the same time as the teenage booster Td/IPV (tetanus, diphtheria and polio) vaccine at around 13-15 years of age. In most areas these vaccines are offered in school, in year 9 or 10. Information and a consent form will be sent to you through the school. In areas where the teenage booster is delivered through your GP surgery you will receive an invitation to attend from them.

## **Are there any reasons why I should not receive the MenC vaccine?**

You should not have the vaccine if you have had a severe (life threatening) reaction to either a previous dose of MenC vaccine or any ingredient of the MenC vaccine.

If you have any other medical conditions or allergies, speak to the person offering you the vaccine.

## How is the vaccine given?

The vaccine is an injection given in the upper arm and is very quick. If you are nervous, tell the person who is giving you the injection beforehand.

## Are there any side effects?

You may get some redness, swelling and/or tenderness in your arm where you had the vaccine but this usually gets better within a day or two. Some people experience headaches, fever, aches and may feel tired. Very rarely other side effects occur, including dizziness, sickness, fits, fainting, numbness and muscle weakness but these normally get better on their own.

If you are worried after your vaccination you should speak to your doctor, practice nurse or school nurse. More information on side effects is available from [www.nhs.uk/vaccinations](http://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations). Individuals can also report suspected side effects online by visiting [www.yellowcard.gov.uk](http://www.yellowcard.gov.uk) or by calling the Yellow Card hotline on **0808 100 3352** (Monday to Friday 10.00 to 14.00).

## **If I have already had the MenC vaccine, am I still protected?**

If you had the vaccine under 10 years of age, you should have a booster dose. If you have received the MenC vaccine at 10 years or older then a further dose is not needed.

## **Do I need any other vaccines now?**

When you are having your Td/IPV and MenC boosters, it's a good idea to check with the nurse or doctor that all your other immunisations are up to date – for example, MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine and if you are a girl, HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine.

## **What do I need to do?**

If you receive a consent form through school, make sure you and your parent/guardian read through the information and return the signed form to school as soon as possible. It's best to involve parents/guardians, but in some circumstances you can give consent for yourself if you are able to fully understand what is being offered.

Whether you are being offered the vaccine in school or in your GP surgery, make sure you know where and when you need to attend.

## What if I am ill on the day of the appointment?

If you have a minor illness, such as a cold, you should have the immunisation as planned.

If you are unwell with a high temperature, delay the vaccine until your temperature has settled. An appointment should be arranged as soon as you are well.

## Where can I get more information?

You can talk to your GP, practice nurse or school nurse if you would like further information, or follow one of the links below.

Further information on consent in health care for young people is available from:

[www.wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/consent/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/consent/?lang=en)

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### For more information on meningitis and septicaemia see:

Meningitis Research Foundation:  
[www.meningitis.org/](http://www.meningitis.org/)

Meningitis Trust:  
[www.meningitis-trust.org/](http://www.meningitis-trust.org/)

To find out more you can visit:

**NHS Direct Wales:**

[www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/)

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Copies of this leaflet are available by e-mailing: [hplibrary@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:hplibrary@wales.nhs.uk) or telephoning **0845 606 4050**

This leaflet is available on the Welsh Government immunisation website: [www.wales.gov.uk/immunisation](http://www.wales.gov.uk/immunisation)

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