



Mae Brechu yn achub bywydau
Vaccination saves lives



Protect your baby against meningitis and septicaemia

**Infections caused by
meningococcal B bacteria**



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This leaflet includes information about the MenB vaccine and the disease it will help protect against.

It also includes information about using paracetamol after vaccinations.

Two serious types of infection meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning) are usually caused by MenB. There is a vaccine to help protect against MenB infection.

Parents fear meningitis and septicaemia because they:

- come on suddenly;
- progress very quickly;
- can kill in hours; and
- can leave survivors with lifelong disabilities.

What is meningitis?

Meningitis is inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord. It can progress very rapidly and can lead to deafness, blindness, epilepsy (fits), learning difficulties and sometimes death.

What is septicaemia?

Septicaemia (blood poisoning) is a serious, life-threatening infection that gets worse very quickly. The risk of death is higher than with meningitis.

What is MenB?

MenB is short for meningococcal B bacteria. MenB is one of several types of meningococcal bacteria (the other most common types include W, Y and C).

Most cases of meningitis and septicaemia in the UK are caused by the B type, especially in young children and teenagers. In 2013 in England and Wales there were over 500 confirmed MenB cases in children aged under five. The meningococcal bacteria can also cause outbreaks in nurseries, schools and universities.



How does MenB spread?

MenB bacteria live in the throats of about 1 in 10 of people without causing any problems at all – in fact, they help build up immunity. The bacteria can spread to other people through coughing, sneezing or kissing.

How do the MenB bacteria cause serious illness?

Sometimes the bacteria in the throat get into the bloodstream, causing septicaemia, or they can get to the brain leading to meningitis. MenB bacteria can cause both at the same time.

Who is most likely to get MenB?

MenB mostly affects infants and young children. This is because their immune systems aren't yet fully developed to fight off infection. But meningitis and septicaemia can strike at any age, so it is important to know the signs and symptoms of the diseases.



Symptoms may appear in any order and some may not appear at all. See the illustration below for symptoms.

Babies and toddlers



Fever, cold hands and feet



Refusing food and vomiting



Fretful, dislike being handled



Drowsy, floppy, unresponsive



Rapid breathing or grunting



Spots or rash (see glass test)



Unusual cry, moaning



Tense bulging fontanelle (soft spot)



Stiff neck, dislike bright lights



Convulsions or seizures

The typical rash of meningococcal septicaemia does not fade when you press it. You can test for it by pressing the side of a clear glass firmly against the skin (see picture). Not all children develop this typical rash, which usually starts as small pinpricks but spreads rapidly to form deep purple patches. Remember – symptoms do not appear in order and some may not appear at all. If you are in any doubt about the health of your child, trust your instincts and get medical help urgently. If you can't get in touch with your doctor, go to the emergency department of your nearest hospital.



Can MenB disease be treated?

Anyone who has MenB disease needs to go to hospital urgently and have immediate treatment with antibiotics. If treatment is started quickly, disability or death are more likely to be avoided.

Can MenB disease be prevented?

Yes. The MenB vaccine is designed to protect against most MenB infections. Since the vaccine was introduced, the number of MenB cases in infants has dropped by around half.



How will I know when immunisations are due?

Children are sent an appointment to have their MenB vaccination at the appropriate age. Most surgeries and health centres run special immunisation or baby clinics.

The MenB vaccine should be given with other routine vaccinations at:

two months;

four months; and

12 to 13 months.

They are usually given in the left thigh.

This means my baby could have four vaccinations in one session between 12 and 13 months of age. Isn't that too much?

No. From birth, babies' immune systems protect them from the germs that surround them. Without this protection, babies would not be able to defend themselves against the tens of thousands of bacteria and viruses that cover their skin, nose, throat and intestines. This protection carries on throughout life.

Studies have shown it is safe to have these four vaccinations at the same time and your baby will be protected from some very serious infections without delay. The vaccinations will be given in one session when your baby is between 12 and 13 months old.

What if babies miss their MenB vaccinations when they are due?

If your baby misses any of their vaccinations speak to your doctor or practice nurse to rearrange them as soon as possible.



Does the MenB vaccine have any side effects?

Your baby may get some redness and soreness where the vaccine was given and may be a bit irritable or feel poorly for a few days. The most common side effect of the vaccine is fever (a high temperature – above 37.5°C). You should give your baby the correct dose of infant-strength paracetamol liquid straight after each of the first two doses of MenB vaccine to help reduce the risk of them getting a fever and to reduce the symptoms if they do.

When should I give the paracetamol to my baby?

You should give the first dose as soon as possible after the vaccination. Use only infant-strength (120mg/5ml) paracetamol suspension. For very premature babies (born before 32 weeks), paracetamol should be prescribed by your doctor. One dose for a baby aged two to six months is half a teaspoon, or 2.5ml, measured using the spoon or syringe provided. Then give the second dose four to six hours after the first one, and the third dose four to six hours after the second. You will need to do this after each of the first two MenB vaccinations.

Make sure you have a supply of infant-strength paracetamol at home before your baby's first immunisation appointment. You can buy it from a pharmacist or supermarket.

Don't give the first dose before your vaccine visit, because your nurse will first need to check that your child doesn't have signs of an existing infection that can sometimes be a reason to delay vaccination.

What if my baby spits out the paracetamol?

This doesn't usually happen, but if your baby spits out more than half the paracetamol within a few minutes of having it, you can repeat the dose of paracetamol again straight away.

How do I treat my baby if they have a fever?

The paracetamol should help to prevent fever after the vaccination. If your baby still has a fever after the first three doses of paracetamol, but is otherwise well, you can continue giving them paracetamol for up to 48 hours. You should always leave at least four hours between doses and never give more than four doses in a day. You can try to keep your baby cool by making sure they don't have too many layers of clothes or blankets on. If your baby is unwell, trust your instincts and speak to your GP or call NHS Direct Wales on **0845 46 47** or call **111** if this service is available in your area.



If 48 hours after their vaccination your baby still has a fever you should speak to your GP or call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47.

Does my baby need paracetamol with the second set of vaccinations at three months?

Your baby will not receive the MenB vaccine at the three month vaccinations, so the risk of fever is lower. However, if your baby does get a fever and seems unwell, you can give them paracetamol at that time.

Does my baby need paracetamol with the booster vaccinations at 12 to 13 months?

At 12 to 13 months, the risk of fever after routine vaccinations with or without the MenB is similar. So, your baby does not need three doses of paracetamol with these routine vaccinations. However, if your baby does get a fever and seems unwell, you can give your baby paracetamol at that time.



Do not give your baby other medicines unless they have been prescribed by your doctor.



Never give medicines containing aspirin to children under 16 years.

Are there any babies who should not have the vaccine?

The vaccine should not be given to babies who have had a severe life threatening reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine, or any ingredient in the vaccine.

What if my baby is ill on the day of the appointment?

If your baby has a minor illness without a fever, such as a cold, they can have their vaccinations as normal. If your baby is ill with a fever, put off the immunisation until they have recovered.

If your baby:

- has a bleeding disorder (for example, haemophilia, where the blood doesn't clot properly); or
- has had a fit not associated with fever;

Speak to your doctor, practice nurse or health visitor before your child has any vaccination.

The MenB vaccine helps protect infants and young children from meningitis and septicaemia caused by the MenB bacteria, but other bacteria and viruses can also cause these conditions.

Yellow Card scheme

You can report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card scheme online at: yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk or by calling the Yellow Card hotline on **0800 731 6789** (Monday to Friday, 10am to 2pm).

Where can I get more information?

Meningitis Now

Visit: www.meningitisnow.org

Free helpline: **0808 80 10 388**
(9am to 4pm Monday to Friday)

Email: helpline@meningitisnow.org
(emails are answered during office hours only)

Meningitis Research Foundation

Visit: www.meningitis.org

Free helpline: **080 8800 3344**
(9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)

Email: helpline@meningitis.org
(emails are answered during office hours only)

If you have any questions or want more information, you can visit 111.wales.nhs.uk, talk to your doctor or nurse or call **NHS 111 Wales**.

If **111** is not available in your area, please call **0845 46 47**. Calls from landlines and mobiles cost 2p per minute (plus your telephone provider's usual charge).

You can find out more about the vaccine, including its contents and possible side effects, at www.medicines.org.uk/emc. You will need to enter the name of the vaccine (Bexsero) in the search box. You can also see the patient leaflet online.

The routine vaccination schedule that shows you which vaccinations are offered in Wales is available from: 111.wales.nhs.uk/pdfs/adultschedule.pdf

To order more copies of this leaflet, visit:

[www.publichealthwales.org/
HealthInformationResources](http://www.publichealthwales.org/HealthInformationResources)

To find out how the NHS uses your information, visit: [111.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/
yourinfoyourrights](http://111.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/yourinfoyourrights)

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