

Primary care communication from the Public Health Protection Unit– information on meningitis and vaccination to support enquiries from patients in the wake of the Kent outbreak.

Background

UKHSA are currently managing an outbreak of meningococcal meningitis centred on Canterbury and Kent University. The outbreak has been confirmed to have been caused by a group B strain of the meningococcal bacteria, but it is currently unknown whether this is one of the group B strains included in available Men B vaccinations. At this stage, there is no evidence of wider community transmission beyond identified contact groups, and no cases linked to Scotland.

We are aware that as a result of the media attention on the outbreak, GP surgeries will be receiving queries from patients and parents, in particular with queries relating to meningitis vaccinations. We have developed this communication to help address these.

UKHSA are issuing a communication to universities across the UK and this will be supplemented by a local communication provided by PHPU to higher education settings and local authority education departments.

Our local communication includes advice for students seeking to check their own vaccination status. For those born in the GGC area, this will include advice that GPs can be contacted to check vaccination history in the event of the student's Red book not being accessible. This may result in an increase in calls to your surgery from students who would have received vaccinations in GGC during childhood.

NHS Vaccination schedule

The NHS inform pages include the vaccination schedules for [children](#) and [young people](#). This includes the following meningitis vaccinations:

- the Men B vaccination at 8 weeks, 12 weeks and 12 months
- the MenACWY vaccination during the S3 school year (aged 13 or 14)

The MenB vaccination is offered to children under 2 who may have missed appointments in their first year, but is not available on the NHS for children over 2. Young people aged up to 25 are eligible to catch up on the MenACWY vaccination if they have missed this.

Responses to FAQ from patients

1. How can I check what vaccines my child has had?

The Public Health Department do not hold vaccine records. The first step to checking your child's vaccination history would be to look at their Red Book, but if you do not

have this, then you should ask your health visitor (for children under 5) or your child's GP practice who can contact Child Health to request your child's vaccination records.

2. Can I get a vaccine for MenB on the NHS?

The MenB vaccine is part of the routine NHS childhood immunisation programme and is offered to infants. Those under the age of 2 who have missed a Men B vaccine, are eligible for this in a catch-up form. For older children, teenagers, and adults, the MenB vaccine is not routinely offered on the NHS. There are a number of private providers available who will be able to administer Men B vaccine. You will understand that we cannot recommend any one private provider over another.

3. What about MenACVWY vaccination?

There are numerous strains of the meningococcal infection. The MenACWY vaccination gives good protection against MenA, MenC, MenW, and MenY. This vaccination is routinely offered in the UK to school pupils aged 13 or 14, but students and young adults who have not previously had the MenACWY vaccine [may be eligible](#) to receive it up to age 25. If anyone eligible has missed their Men ACWY vaccination, their GP can make a referral for this.

Additionally, for students attending universities in Glasgow, the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Immunisations team run clinics on campus at the start of term offering vaccinations for eligible students who might have missed these.

4) My teenage child has never had a meningitis vaccine – can they get one?

Children aged 13 or 14 will be offered the MenACWY vaccination as part of the national routine schedule. Children who have missed this can catch up by being referred via their GP.

The NHS does not provide MenB vaccination out with the national routine schedule.