

Summary of Information for Immunisation Professionals

18 March 2026

Background

Meningococcal bacteria can be found in the nasopharynx (nose and throat) of approximately 10% of the population. Not all individuals will go on to develop symptoms of meningococcal disease.

MenB Vaccine Programme Overview

- The MenB vaccine, providing protection against meningococcal group B disease, was introduced into the routine UK childhood schedule in 2015, following advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).
- The routine schedule was updated in 2025 with doses at 8 weeks, 12 weeks, and a booster at 12–13 months of age to strengthen protection in the youngest children.
- Catch-up eligibility: infants/children can receive outstanding doses up to age 2 years; no catch-up is offered beyond this, based on JCVI guidance.
- Children born before 2015 will not have received MenB as part of routine scheduling.
- In Scotland, the Scottish Government set specific birth-date cut-offs to implement the JCVI's recommendations:
 - Routine offer: babies born \geq 1 July 2015
 - Limited catch-up: babies born \geq 1 May 2015
 - Not included: children born before 1 May 2015

Immunological Considerations: MenB

- MenB vaccine is highly effective at preventing meningococcal disease in infants.
- The MenB vaccine offers limited impact on reducing nasopharyngeal carriage and transmission.
- The vaccine does not cover all circulating MenB strains.

MenACWY Programme

- This vaccine protects against meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y. MenACWY vaccine does not protect against meningococcal group B.
- The MenACWY vaccine is routinely offered to S3 (~14 years) pupils primarily through a school-based programme, due to an incidence peak in older adolescents and young adults, and to provide wider population protection.
- Individuals (including those who are new to the UK) who have missed the opportunity to receive their adolescent dose of MenACWY remain eligible until their 25th birthday. Catch up is recommended especially prior to starting university or college. This can be discussed with **local NHS immunisation teams** to arrange an appointment.

Current Outbreak in Kent: Advice to people in Scotland

- Since the beginning of March 2026, a large-scale UKHSA-led response was initiated in England with cases remaining geographically localised to Kent and there is no evidence of any increased risk or wider spread elsewhere.
- Exposed contacts are offered antibiotics and, where appropriate, MenB vaccine as part of incident control.
- People in Scotland can be reassured that there is no increased risk of MenB or other meningococcal disease here at present. Therefore, no additional vaccination or catch-up campaigns are currently recommended locally.

Symptom Recognition and Public Messaging

- There should be an emphasis on early detection of meningitis and sepsis symptoms in all age groups.
- Older children, teenagers, and students are at particular risk of delayed recognition.

- Symptoms can include: a high temperature (fever) over 37.5°C (99.5°F), severe and worsening headache, rapid breathing, drowsiness or confusion, shivering, vomiting and diarrhoea, cold hands and feet, and joint and muscle pain. Meningococcal disease can also cause a characteristic rash that does not fade when pressed with a glass, stiff neck, and dislike of bright lights.
- Urgent medical help should be sought via 999 for an ambulance or through A&E. If assistance is less urgent, contact 111 or your GP.
- More information is available on NHSinform: [Meningitis | NHS inform](#) and [Sepsis | NHS inform](#).

Outbreak Response Considerations

- MenB vaccination may be used in outbreak settings if strain-specific and epidemiological assessment supports this. Eligible individuals would be contacted directly by public health teams. Please see guidance for more information on incident management: [Meningococcal disease: guidance on public health management - GOV.UK](#).

MenB stocks

- MenB vaccine stocks for routine delivery as part of the NHS vaccination schedule, and for response to incidents, are available in Scotland.
- Private sales of vaccines are not controlled or managed by NHS Scotland.
- Private sales are managed by arrangements between pharmacy companies and vaccine manufacturers.
- Information on the routine vaccines which are available in Scotland can be found on [NHS Inform](#).