

NCC notes

Have I/has my child been vaccinated against meningitis?

MenB vaccine, which protects against meningococcal group B bacteria, has been part of the routine childhood vaccination schedule in the UK since 2015. The routine schedule was updated in 2025 to further strengthen protection in the youngest babies, with doses at 8 weeks, 12 weeks, and a booster at 12–13 months of age.

Anyone born before 2015 will not have received MenB vaccine as part of their childhood schedule. More specifically, babies born on or after the 1/7/15 were offered MenB vaccine. There was also a one-off catch-up programme for babies born between the 1/5/15 and 30/6/15. Anyone born before 1/7/15 will not have received the MenB vaccine.

To check what vaccinations you or your child have received in the past, please follow the advice available on [NHS Inform](#).

Teenagers are routinely offered the MenACWY vaccine as part of the school immunisation programme, usually in S3 when they are about 14 years old. This vaccine protects against meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y. MenACWY does not protect against meningococcal group B.

I have/my child has missed their meningitis vaccine appointment. Who do I contact to arrange vaccination?

Children who have not yet received all their scheduled doses of MenB vaccine can be offered catch-up doses up to 2 years of age. Contact your local [NHS Immunisation team](#) to arrange an appointment.

Anyone who missed their MenACWY vaccine can still receive it up until their 25th birthday, particularly before starting university or college, by contacting their local [NHS Immunisation team](#) to arrange an appointment.

Why can't I/my child get MenB vaccine?

Recommendations about who should be offered vaccines are made by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which is an independent expert group that advises the government on vaccine policy. Their recommendations are based on protecting those at highest risk.

While it is very effective at protecting infants against meningococcal disease, the MenB vaccine offers limited impact on reducing nasopharyngeal (nose and throat) carriage and transmission, and it does not cover all circulating MenB strains.

There are currently no plans to offer MenB vaccine routinely to anyone other than infants as part of the routine schedule.

If someone in Scotland needed the vaccine as part of an outbreak response, they would be contacted directly.

Am I at risk of meningitis?

Public health teams in England are responding to an outbreak of group B meningococcal disease in Kent. This situation is local to that area and there is currently no evidence of any

increased risk in Scotland. Public Health Scotland are monitoring the situation closely and will provide any updates to current advice as appropriate.

Routine vaccinations provide good protection against infections including meningitis and meningococcal disease, but the bacteria can sometimes escape this protection. Young infants and adolescents are at highest risk of meningococcal disease, especially if not fully vaccinated, but anyone can become seriously unwell from meningitis or septicaemia (sepsis).

Acting quickly saves lives. It is vital for everyone to be aware of the signs and symptoms of meningitis and related disease, and what to do if you have concerns.

What are the symptoms of meningitis?

Symptoms can include:

- fever
- severe headache
- vomiting or diarrhoea
- cold hands and feet
- drowsiness or confusion
- rapid breathing
- stiff neck
- dislike of bright lights
- joint or muscle pain
- a rash that does not fade under a glass

Symptoms can appear in any order and may be mistaken for a cold, flu, or hangover - especially in teenagers and students. For further information, see [Meningitis | NHS inform](#).

If you or anyone you know develops symptoms seek immediate medical help:

- Call 999 or go to A&E if someone seems seriously unwell.
- Call 111 or your GP if you're unsure or worried about symptoms or you think you may have been exposed to someone with meningitis.

I think I may have been in contact with someone with meningitis in the Kent outbreak.

What should I do?

If you visited Club Chemistry in Canterbury between 5th and 7th March 2026, are a student of the University of Kent, or have been in contact with someone with meningitis in the Kent outbreak and you have not already been prescribed preventative antibiotics, contact your local [Health Protection Team](#) urgently to discuss preventative treatment.