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What to expect after immunisations

This leaflet tells you what common side effects might occur after immunisation and what to do about them.





This information should only be used as a guide.

You should also read the leaflets about the vaccines being offered.

What to expect after immunisations given as an injection

The most common side effects are at the place where the injection was given, these include:

- swelling
- redness
- a small hard lump

These usually only last a couple of days and you don't need to do anything about them.

Sometimes young children may become unsettled for a day or two and a fever may develop after immunisation. Older children may also experience fever, tiredness, muscle aches, headache or loss of appetite for a day or two after vaccination.

How to treat a fever

A fever is a body temperature over 37.5°C. Fevers are quite common in young children, but are usually mild. If your child's face feels hot to the touch and they look red or flushed, he or she may have a fever. You can check their temperature with a thermometer.

Keep your child cool by:

- making sure they don't have too many layers of clothes or blankets on.
- giving them plenty of cool drinks (if you are breastfeeding, your child may feed more frequently).

As fevers are usually mild, you only need to give a dose of the appropriate strength paracetamol if your child appears uncomfortable or unwell. Read the instructions on the bottle very carefully. See separate advice about using paracetamol after the MenB vaccine at 2 and 4 months of age.

Remember never give medicines that contain aspirin to children under 16.

After vaccination with Meningitis B (MenB)

Fever can be expected after any vaccination, but is very common when the MenB vaccine is given with the other routine vaccines at two and four months. That is

why it is recommended that your baby gets infant paracetamol when getting these immunisations to prevent and treat fever.

Your baby should have a total of three doses of infant paracetamol at the time of each of their first two MenB immunisations. The doses should be spaced out as follows.

Age of baby	Dose 1 paracetamol	Dose 2 paracetamol	Dose 3 paracetamol
2 and 4 months	one 2.5 ml (60 mg) dose to be given just after their immunisations	one 2.5 ml (60 mg) dose 4–6 hours after dose 1	one 2.5 ml (60 mg) dose 4–6 hours after dose 2

The 2.5ml/60mg dose should be measured and given either using a syringe or with a 2.5ml spoon.

This advice on the use of paracetamol only applies if your baby has had the MenB vaccine with the other routine vaccines at 2 and 4 months of age. If your baby has a fever at any other time you should follow the instructions and dose advice on the product packaging and patient information leaflet.

Although paracetamol is safe in very young children, the current advice for non-vaccine fever is that no more than two doses should be given to babies aged 2–3 months, without seeking the advice of a GP or pharmacist. This is to ensure that fever which

may be due to a serious infection in babies of this age is quickly diagnosed and treated.

Fever is much less common when the MenB booster is given at 12–13 months of age so paracetamol is not needed then. However, if your baby does develop a fever, is irritable, or unwell, then you can give them the correct dose of infant paracetamol if you wish.

For very premature babies (born before 32 weeks gestation) or very small babies (less than 3 kg), paracetamol should be prescribed by your GP according to the baby's weight at the time of immunisation. You should check with your GP and follow the instructions on the prescription.

If you do not have any infant paracetamol liquid at home you should get some in time for your first vaccination visit. It is widely available from pharmacies and supermarkets.

After immunisation with rotavirus vaccine

Babies who have had the rotavirus vaccine can become unsettled (as with most other immunisations) but some may also develop mild diarrhoea. In very rare cases (about 2 in every 100,000 babies immunised), the vaccine can affect the baby's lower gut. They may develop pain

in their tummy, vomiting, and sometimes they may pass what looks like red jelly in their nappies, usually within seven days of vaccination.

If this happens or you're worried about your child, speak to your GP immediately, call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 4647 or go to the emergency department of your nearest hospital.

After immunisation with MMR vaccine

The vaccine contains weakened types of live measles, mumps and rubella viruses. Because the viruses are weakened, people who have had the vaccine **cannot** catch the diseases from the vaccines or infect other people. The three different viruses in the vaccine act at different times and may produce the following side effects:

- After 6–10 days the measles vaccine starts to work and may cause a fever, a measles-like rash and a loss of appetite.
- Around 2–3 weeks after the injection the mumps vaccine may cause mumps-like symptoms (fever and swollen glands).
- The rubella vaccine may cause a brief rash and possibly a slightly raised temperature, usually around 12 to 14 days after the injection, but a rash may also rarely occur up to six weeks later.

After immunisation with the nasal spray flu vaccine

Some individuals may get a runny or blocked nose for a few days. Other less common effects include a slight temperature, feeling unwell, loss of appetite and a headache.

Very rare allergic reactions

Very rarely an immediate allergic reaction can occur following immunisation. This is called an anaphylactic reaction. It can cause breathing difficulties, rashes or swelling that usually start a few minutes after vaccination and may cause the individual to collapse. Information from the UK shows that these reactions occur in less than one in a million routine childhood immunisations. The staff who give immunisations are trained to deal with anaphylactic reactions and people recover completely with treatment.

Yellow Card scheme

Members of the public can report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card scheme. This can be done by visiting www.yellowcard.gov.uk or by calling the Yellow Card hotline on 0808 100 3352 (available Monday to Friday, 10:00-14:00).

Where can I get more information about vaccines?

You can find more information about most of the vaccines used in the UK immunisation programme, including vaccine contents and potential side effects, at <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/> by entering the name of the vaccine in the search box and looking at the Patient Information Leaflet.



The routine immunisation schedule that shows you which immunisations are offered in Wales is available from www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/pdfs/WGCh.pdf.

You should always seek advice from a doctor or nurse if you are worried or call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 4647. You can find more information at www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/



To order more copies of this leaflet, email: hplibrary@wales.nhs.uk or telephone 0845 606 4050.

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