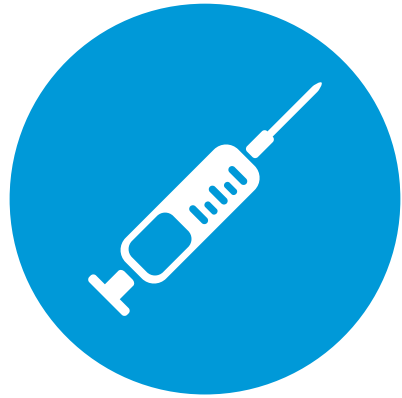


How do vaccines work?



Most vaccines are given in the form of an injection which contains tiny amounts of a bacteria or viruses.⁷ Others may be given as a liquid or a spray.⁸

The bacteria and viruses in a vaccine are killed or weakened and will not overload your child's immune system.⁷



Instead, the vaccine will strengthen your child's immune system, protecting them from getting ill when they come into contact with the bacteria or viruses.⁷



Some vaccines will require more than one dose to give the full protection.⁴ Your GP, nurse or health visitor will be able to advise you on which vaccinations these are and when 'booster' doses are needed.



It only takes a short time for a nurse or GP to vaccinate your child. In many cases the protection provided can last a lifetime, but this depends on the vaccine and the person.⁷ Your GP, nurse or health visitor can provide more information.



Want to know more?

If you're not sure whether your child has had all their vaccinations, or want to know more, speak to your GP, nurse or health visitor.

For more information on vaccinations visit www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations

Many of the recommended vaccinations in the childhood immunisation programme protect against some form of meningitis.¹² These charities provide useful information and support:

Meningitis
Research Foundation
www.meningitis.org

Meningitis
NOW
www.meningitisnow.org

References

¹ NHS Choices: Reasons to have your child vaccinated Available at: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/reasons-to-have-your-child-vaccinated.aspx> Last accessed: October 2013 ² Baraff L, Lee S, Schriger D. Outcomes of bacterial meningitis in children: A meta-analysis. *Pediatr Infect Dis J* 1993; 12:389-94 ³ Bedford H, de Louvois J, Halket S, et al. Meningitis in infancy in England and Wales: follow up at five years. *BMJ* 2001; 323:533-536 ⁴ NHS Choices: The NHS Vaccination schedule. Available at: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/vaccination-schedule-age-checklist.aspx> Last accessed: October 2013 ⁵ WHO: Immunisations, Vaccines and Biologicals. Available at: http://www.who.int/immunization/sow/1_key_messages_chapter1/en/index.html Last accessed: October 2013 ⁶ Public Health England. Vaccination Immunisation. Available at: <http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/VaccinationImmunisation/> Last accessed: October 2013 ⁷ NHS Choices: How Vaccines work. Available at: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/How-vaccines-work.aspx> Last accessed: October 2013 ⁸ Public Health England. The complete routine immunisation schedule 2013/14. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/227651/8515_DoH_Complete_Imm_schedule_A4_2013_09.pdf Last accessed: October 2013 ⁹ Salisbury D, Ramsey M, Noakes K. Immunisation against infectious disease (The Green Book). Department of Health. Updated 2013. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/206232/Green-Book-updated-070513.pdf Last accessed: October 2013 ¹⁰ NICE, Reducing differences in the uptake of immunisations (including targeted vaccines) among children and young people aged under 19 years. Available from: <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/pdf/ph21guidance.pdf> Last accessed: October 2013 ¹¹ CDC, Comparison of the effects of the diseases and the side effects of vaccines. Available at: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/D35CD18A3985212ECA2574E2000F9A4F/\\$File/quick_sideeffects.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/D35CD18A3985212ECA2574E2000F9A4F/$File/quick_sideeffects.pdf) Last accessed: October 2013 ¹² NHS Choices: Meningitis Vaccination. Available at: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Meningitis/Pages/Prevention.aspx> Last accessed: October 2013

Protect their future

Don't wait to vaccinate

For more information speak to your GP, nurse or health visitor



This leaflet was developed by Pfizer Limited in consultation with Dr Kati Hajibagheri, Consultant Paediatrician and clinical lead for immunisation, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.

Every parent wants their children to grow up healthy and happy. Vaccinating against common childhood illnesses is a quick and effective way to protect your child against a range of serious and potentially fatal diseases.¹

This leaflet provides important information you need to know about vaccination, and can also be used as a guide to talk to your GP, health visitor or nurse about your child's vaccinations.

Why are vaccinations so important for children?

From the day your child is born they will come into contact with thousands of germs (bacteria and viruses).¹ The majority of these germs will not cause them any harm, but some cause infections, such as meningitis, that can make your child seriously ill and even lead to disability or death.^{2,3}



Vaccinations can help your child to fight off these bacteria and viruses, protecting them against many serious illnesses – and the complications that can arise from them.¹

Simply put, vaccines save lives. This is why vaccines are offered to children in the UK for free by the National Health Service (NHS).⁴




What vaccinations your child needs and when^{4,8}



Different vaccines are recommended for your child at different ages. The table below shows what your child needs and when.

When	Vaccine
2 months old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio and Haemophilus Influenzae Type B (Hib) Pneumococcal Rotavirus
3 months old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio and Hib (second dose) Meningococcal group C (Men C) Rotavirus (second dose)
4 months old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio and Hib (third dose) Pneumococcal (second dose)
Between 12 and 13 months old – within a month of the first birthday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hib/Men C (booster) Pneumococcal (third dose) Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)
2 and 3 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nasal flu vaccine (annual)
3 years and 4 months, or soon after	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio (pre-school booster) MMR (second dose)
Girls aged 12 to 13 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human papillomavirus (HPV) (3 vaccines in 6 months)
Around 14 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tetanus, diphtheria and polio (booster) Men C (booster)

 **Don't wait to vaccinate.**
For more information speak to your GP, nurse or health visitor.

Myths and facts



There is a lot of information available about vaccinations. Below are some common myths and facts.

Myths

As most children are vaccinated, I do not need to vaccinate my child

Some diseases are being wiped out so I do not need to vaccinate my child

Protection from a vaccine will "wear off" or "run out"

Vaccination can make my child seriously ill

Facts

Vaccination does not just protect your child – it can help protect your whole community.⁹ When a large number of the population is vaccinated this provides indirect protection to people who can't be vaccinated because they're too ill or are having treatment that damages their immune system, such as treatment for cancer.^{7,9} However, to lower the chance of unvaccinated people contracting serious and highly infectious illnesses, and help prevent outbreaks of disease, it's estimated that at least 9 in 10 children need to have the recommended vaccines.¹⁰

As more and more of the population is vaccinated, diseases can sometimes disappear completely and the vaccination programme can be stopped. However, so far this has only happened with smallpox.¹ The only time it's safe to stop vaccinating children against an illness is when the disease has been wiped out worldwide.¹

Many vaccinations can provide long-term protection against infection, depending on the vaccination and the person being vaccinated.⁷ However some vaccines also require a booster – your GP, nurse or health visitor will be able to help you understand which vaccines may need a boost and when.⁴

Although no vaccine is completely risk-free, the chances of major side effects from a vaccine are tiny compared with the potential impact to your child's health if they contracted the disease itself.¹¹