

## **MenC vaccine**

### **Parent information leaflet**

#### **What is meningococcal C disease?**

Meningococcal C disease is a serious and sometimes fatal illness which can cause meningitis and septicaemia. Symptoms include fever, stiff neck, headache, joint pains and rash.

#### **How is MenC disease spread?**

The bacteria that cause meningitis C disease live in the nose and throat. A person who carries the bacteria can spread the disease by coughing, sneezing or even breathing.

#### **What illnesses does it cause?**

Men C disease can cause serious illness including:

- meningitis (inflammation of the lining around the brain), and
- septicaemia (blood poisoning)

#### **Who is most at risk?**

MenC disease is most common in children under five. Babies under one year of age are especially at risk. It is also common in teenagers aged 15-19 years.

#### **Is there a vaccine against MenC?**

Since 2000, MenC vaccine has been included in the childhood immunisation programme.

Babies born on or after 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 should get MenC vaccine at 4 months with a further dose given at 13 months, at the same time as their other vaccines.

Babies born before 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 should get MenC vaccine at 4 and 6 months of age with a further dose given at 13 months, at the same time as their other vaccines.

#### **Why has the primary childhood immunisation schedule changed?**

The MenC immunisation schedule has changed from three doses at four, six and 13 months to two doses at four and 13 months.

The reason the schedule has changed is that we now know that two doses give babies as much protection as three doses.

#### **Is it safe to get more than one vaccine at the same time?**

Yes, it is safe. The vaccines are timed to give your baby the best protection.

Does my child need a MenC booster?

To have extra protection against MenC infection, your child should get a MenC booster at 13 months, at the same time as their Hib vaccine.

A second booster dose of MenC vaccine is given in 1<sup>st</sup> year of second level school.

#### **What to expect after the vaccine**

Some children may have discomfort, redness and swelling where the injection was given.

They may be irritable and have a fever. If this happens you can give them infant paracetamol or ibuprofen.

You should also give them plenty to drink. Make sure they are not too warm and that their clothes are not rubbing against the injection area.

**Who should not receive the MenC vaccine?**

The MenC vaccine is safe for most people. However, your child should not get it if they have a true allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose or to any part of the vaccine.

**Remember**

MenC vaccine only protects against MenC meningitis and septicaemia caused by meningococcal C infection.

There are other causes of meningitis and septicaemia so you need to know the symptoms to look out for. These may include:

- fever,
- refusing food,
- pale or blotchy skin, spots or a rash, or
- drowsiness or difficulty in waking.

If you are worried about your baby call your family doctor immediately.

**For more information**

- Contact your family doctor or public health nurse
- Get a copy of “Your Childs Immunisations – A Guide for Parents” which is available from your public health nurse.