



A guide to the MenB vaccine that protects against meningococcal group B (MenB) disease

What is MenB disease?

MenB disease is a serious illness caused by group B strains of meningococcal bacteria. These bacteria are a major cause of meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and septicaemia (blood poisoning) in teenagers and young people.

Meningococcal infection:

- can come on suddenly
- can progress very quickly
- can kill in hours
- can leave survivors with life-long disabilities

How are meningococcal bacteria spread?

The bacteria live in the throats of about 10% of healthy people. They do not spread easily but may be passed on through close prolonged contact, for example within families or between partners, probably by coughing, sneezing or kissing.

How common is MenB disease?

Meningococcal disease occurs in cycles, with between 500 and 1,700 children and adults in England developing MenB disease every year. Around half of these cases occur in children under five years of age, with infants at highest risk, followed by late teenagers and young adults.

Cases of meningococcal disease due to strains other than MenB are now rare due to the use of effective vaccines. Teenagers in the UK are offered a vaccine against groups A, C, W and Y at school, but this vaccine will not protect you against MenB.

Can MenB disease be treated?

Meningitis and septicaemia need urgent admission to hospital and rapid treatment with antibiotics. If treatment is started quickly, then it is much less likely to be life-threatening or cause permanent disability. If you think your you or anyone around you has symptoms of meningitis or septicaemia you should trust your instincts and get urgent medical advice by calling NHS 111.

Is this vaccine safe?

The MenB vaccine has been thoroughly tested and meets strict safety criteria, it has been routinely used in the infant vaccination programme in the UK since 2015 and has a good safety profile.

The vaccine is called Bexsero and more information about it can be read here:

<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/5168/smpc>

Does the MenB vaccine have any side effects?

Some people may:

- have a temperature (fever)
- have redness, swelling or tenderness where they had the injection, or
- nausea and appetite loss

These normally clear up within 1 or 2 days of vaccination. You can take a dose of over the counter paracetamol 4 to 6 hours after vaccination to alleviate symptoms if you have them.

If you think your you or anyone around you has symptoms of meningitis or septicaemia you should trust your instincts and get urgent medical advice by calling NHS 111.

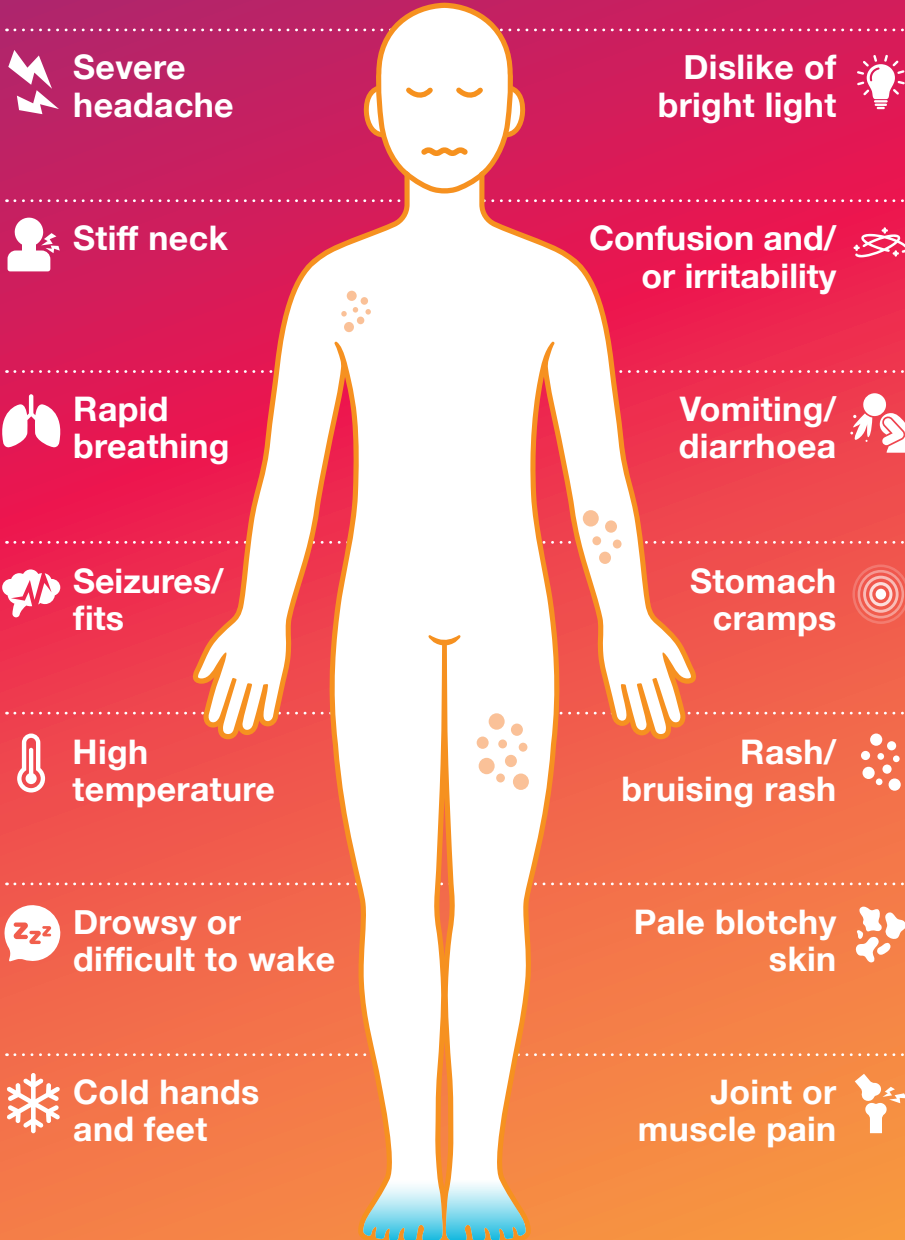
Reporting side effects

More serious side effects are rare but suspected side effects can be reported to the Yellow Card scheme:

- online at [Yellow Card Scheme](#)
- downloading and using the Yellow Card app for [Apple devices](#) or [Android devices](#)
- by calling the Yellow Card scheme on 0800 731 6789 (9am to 5pm)



Meningitis and septicaemia



Meningitis can kill in hours

These are just some of the warning signs. If you are worried for yourself or someone else get medical help immediately. Call NHS 111.

Find out more:

Find out about the MenACWY vaccine

www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/men-acwy-vaccine/



Signs and symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia

www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis/symptoms/

