

Re. Meningitis

27 May 2026

Dear Student

Do you live in Weymouth or Portland or Chickerell or attend Coastland College at the Weymouth campus? If yes – then this letter applies to you.

As you are probably aware, in March and April of this year, there were three young people who had meningitis B (MenB) infection. In response to these cases, we have offered all young people of secondary school age antibiotics and vaccination on a precautionary basis. We have not seen any further cases with this strain of MenB.

The vaccination for MenB requires two doses to protect you from infection. Most people have now received the first dose. If this letter applies to you, but you have not yet received your first dose, you can attend the clinics below or take this letter to your GP, who should be able to provide you with this vaccine.

We are now offering a second dose. It is really important that you have this second dose. Otherwise, you will not be protected against the infection.

How can I get my second dose of MenB vaccine?

There will be clinics administering the second dose (or the first dose if you haven't had it) of the vaccine at the following places and times for students at Coastland College.

Date	Time	Location
Friday 5 June	16:00-19:30	All Saints Academy
Saturday 13 June	09:00-17:00	Budmouth Academy

Information about the Vaccine

What is the vaccination I will receive?

The name of the vaccine is Bexsero. Bexsero is a vaccine that helps protect against most strains of Neisseria meningitidis group B (MenB) bacteria. These bacteria can cause meningitis (an infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and septicaemia (blood poisoning). It has been used in the UK routine immunisation programme for babies since 2015 and has led to 75% reduction in MenB disease in vaccinated groups.

You need **two doses** of the vaccine for protection. The second dose must be given at least four weeks after the first dose but can be given later. The vaccine is given by injection usually in the upper arm.

Does the vaccine have any side-effects?

It is common to get some swelling, redness or tenderness where you have the injection. You may also get a mild fever, feeling sick, headache or muscle aches but these symptoms should disappear after 1 or 2 days.

More serious side effects are rare. You can take over the counter pain medication such as paracetamol to manage these symptoms if needed.

Any side effects are usually very mild, but the vaccine may make you feel a bit unwell for a short time, **but it's really important you completed the two doses** as one dose alone is not effective

How long will it take for the vaccine to protect me?

It takes at least 2 weeks from your second dose of vaccine for your body to produce antibodies to give you a good level of protection.

I've already had the Men ACWY vaccine, do I still need this?

Yes. The MenACWY vaccine does not protect against MenB, which is the strain involved in this outbreak.

Am I at risk?

The risk of getting the disease is very low. The bacteria that cause the disease are very common: at any time about 1 in 10 of us has them in our noses and throats without ever knowing they are there, and for most of us this is harmless. We pass the bacteria between each other by close contact (e.g. coughing, sneezing, etc.). Even when this happens, most of us will not become ill because we have natural immunity. The bacteria do not naturally live or survive for long outside the human body.

Signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease

It's important everyone is alert to the signs and symptoms of meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia. Get medical help immediately if you or someone you know experiences these symptoms - call NHS 111 for urgent advice, or 999 in a medical emergency.

- a rash that doesn't fade when pressed with a glass
- sudden onset of high fever
- severe and worsening headache
- stiff neck
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- joint and muscle pain
- dislike of bright lights
- very cold hands and feet
- seizures
- confusion/delirium
- extreme sleepiness/difficulty waking.

Anyone who becomes unwell with symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia should seek medical help urgently at the closest Accident and Emergency Department or by dialling 999. If you're not sure if your symptoms are serious, use [NHS 111 online](#) or call 111 to find out what to do.

Further Information

You can find out more about meningitis here at <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2025/10/31/what-is-meningitis-symptoms-risks-and-how-to-protect-yourself/>