

NHS

We are changing our vaccination schedule!

Only 2 injections at 8, 12, 16 weeks!

For babies born from 1 January 2020, the vaccination schedule for the pneumococcal vaccine (PCV) is changing.

Instead of three injections at the 8 and 16 weeks appointment (and one at 12 weeks), babies will now receive only two injections at each of these appointments, plus rotavirus by mouth at 8 and 12 weeks.

All babies born on or after 1 January 2020 will receive their first dose of the pneumococcal vaccine with their other infant vaccinations at 12 weeks of age and a booster dose of this vaccine on or after their first birthday.

This change to the schedule is being made because the pneumococcal vaccine used since 2006 has been so successful.

High uptake of this very effective vaccine has resulted in excellent control of the types of pneumococcal bacteria that the vaccine protects against. Very little disease caused by these bacteria is now seen in the UK and vaccine experts have therefore agreed that a single dose of vaccine in infancy and a booster dose around the first birthday should continue to provide good protection for children and for the community as a whole. This will mean one less injection for babies.

Pneumococcal infection

There are more than 90 different types of pneumococcal bacteria that can cause disease in humans. They can cause serious (invasive) disease such as meningitis and septicaemia (blood poisoning) and less serious infections such as ear infections (otitis media), sinusitis, pneumonia and bronchitis. Pneumococcal infections are most common in winter months and particularly affect the very young, older people and people with certain medical conditions.

Why are children given a pneumococcal vaccine?

The pneumococcal vaccine provides protection against the 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria that most commonly caused disease before the vaccine was introduced. Importantly, the vaccine not only protects children who receive it, but also others in the wider community since it stops children from carrying the pneumococcal bacteria in their nose and throat and passing them on to others.

The pneumococcal vaccine

The vaccine that has been given to children in the UK since 2010 is called Prevenar 13 and this vaccine will continue to be used. This vaccine is used in many countries worldwide and is proven to be a safe and effective vaccine.

After immunisation with PCV, as with any vaccine, some babies may get swelling, redness or tenderness at the injection site or a mild fever. If you are worried about your child, trust your instincts. Speak to your doctor, call the free NHS helpline 111 or go to the emergency department of your nearest hospital.



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