



## **THE THREE SHIRES MEDICAL PRACTICE**

Coleme, Marshfield, Pucklechurch and Wick Surgeries

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# CHILDHOOD VACCINATIONS

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This leaflet will give you information about childhood vaccinations. This is so you can make decisions about getting your child vaccinated.

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## **Why are vaccines important?**

Vaccinations are important so we can protect ourselves and our children. They stop millions of deaths across the world every year. Diseases like smallpox, polio and tetanus are now very rarely seen in the UK due to vaccinations. They used to kill or disable millions of people. Other illnesses like measles and diphtheria have reduced to a low number of cases each year. These cases are often related to travel. If people stop having vaccines, it's possible for these diseases to quickly spread again.

## **When does a child under 5 get their vaccinations?**

All children in the UK get vaccinations at:

- 8 weeks
- 12 weeks
- 16 weeks
- 1 year
- 3 years and 4 months



## **How to book your child's vaccination appointment**

When your child is due a vaccination, you will be sent an invitation letter. Vaccinations are done by a nurse at your GP practice. If you miss an appointment, it's important that you contact the surgery to arrange another.

If you're worried your child is not well enough for a vaccination, ask your practice first. It's important that vaccinations aren't delayed.

## What to expect after the appointment

Your baby or child may cry for a little while after a vaccination. They should feel better after a cuddle. The area where the needle goes in can be sore for 2 to 3 days. This should go away on its own.

Some children may feel sad and unwell, and some may get a high fever. If your child develops a fever:

- make sure they're not wearing too many layers of clothes or blankets
- give them plenty to drink
- give them liquid paracetamol or ibuprofen for children to bring their fever down



It's advised that you give your baby liquid paracetamol (such as Calpol) after the MenB vaccine to reduce the risk of a fever. This vaccine is given at 8 weeks, 16 weeks and 1 year old. Make sure you follow the instructions that come with the medicine. If you're unsure, ask a pharmacist for advice.

## Can I refuse my child's vaccinations?

Vaccines are not mandatory in the UK, and they cannot be given without your approval. However, it's important to remember that vaccines will protect your child for many years. Without vaccination your child is at greater risk of getting a range of serious illnesses.

## Can I change my mind about vaccinating my child?

Sometimes parents choose not to vaccinate, but then later decide to make sure their child is protected. It's best for your child to have their vaccinations according to the NHS vaccination schedule, but it's never too late to check if they can still have them. Call your GP surgery to make sure your child has any vaccinations they've missed.

## Finally

We hope you have found this information helpful. Please ask us about anything you don't understand.