

# Prevention and Wellbeing Factsheet: Childhood Immunisations

## Key messages

- Immunisation is a simple, safe and highly effective way of protecting children and adults around them from harmful diseases before they come into contact with them.
- It is important that immunisations are given at the right age to prepare the child's immune system. Routine childhood vaccinations start when a baby is eight weeks old.

## Why is it important?

- Childhood immunisation is necessary to protect all children against potentially dangerous diseases and is known to impact positively on children's health.
- Some diseases are particularly serious in young babies and could be prevented through vaccinations at the right age. For example, measles is more likely to lead to complications in babies under the age of one compared with older children.
- Immunisation not only protects the child and their family, but also prevents the spread of the disease to the wider community.

## The picture in Barnet

- Data from 2014/15 show that rates of MenC vaccination at 1 year (i.e. two doses of the meningitis C vaccination received by the age of 1) and MMR1 vaccination at 5 years (i.e. one dose of the MMR vaccine received by the age of 5) are similar in Barnet to rates in England. For all other indicators of childhood vaccination rates of uptake are lower than those nationally.
- The aim across the borough is to increase immunisation uptake and protect more children from potentially serious diseases. Most

## Other important messages to consider

- Some vaccines are given more than once. A gap is left between these vaccine doses to ensure that each vaccine has sufficient time to work properly.
- The recommended gap between the doses is only a minimum. If the gap is longer –for example if an appointment is missed– the child doesn't have to start the course again.

## Signposting to local services and online support

### **Children's Centres**

From May 2017 most Children Centre staff within Barnet will be able to provide basic information on childhood immunisation.

- <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/children-young-people-and-families/childcare/childrens-centres.html>

### **NHS Choices**

For information on the timeline for childhood vaccinations provided by the NHS to all babies and children in the UK visit the NHS choices website:

- [www.nhs.uk/conditions/pages/childhood-vaccination-schedule.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pages/childhood-vaccination-schedule.aspx)

Some people with a high level of need require support from a health or social care professional. They can be directed to their GP or Social Care Direct (020 8359 5000; [socialcaredirect@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:socialcaredirect@barnet.gov.uk); 07506 693707 for text messages; 020 8359 2000 for urgent out of hours queries) as appropriate.

For anyone with caring responsibilities who lives or works in the borough, Barnet Carers Centre can offer advice, information, emotional and practical support. They can be contacted on the following numbers: 020 8343 9698 (Adult Carers Outreach & Support Service and Carers Hospital Discharge Coordinator); 020 8432 2092 (Barnet Young Carers and Siblings); 020 8432 2091 (Community Home & Support Services) or via email [admin@barnetcarers.org](mailto:admin@barnetcarers.org).