

A guide to the Meningococcal B vaccine
for protection against
gonorrhoea





for gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men

From August 2025, gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) who are considered at higher risk of gonorrhoea infection are being offered the meningococcal group B vaccine called 'Bexsero' to help protect them against gonorrhoea infections. It will be available at sexual health (GUM) clinics.

The vaccine will also help to prevent cases of meningitis and septicaemia caused by the meningococcal B bacteria.

Reducing your risk of infection

Gonorrhoea caused by the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STI) in the UK. GBMSM who have sex with more partners are at increased risk of contracting it. Gonorrhoea infections can also increase the risk of getting other infections. Untreated gonorrhoea infection can cause serious problems including infections in the testicles and eyes.

What is Bexsero?

Bexsero is a vaccine that helps protect against *Neisseria meningitidis* group B (MenB) bacteria, which 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. Recent research has shown that the Bexsero vaccine may also offer some protection against gonorrhoea.

How does Bexsero help protect against gonorrhoea?

The meningococcus (*Neisseria meningitidis*) and gonococcus (*Neisseria gonorrhoeae*) are closely related. While Bexsero is primarily designed to protect against meningococcal infections (meningitis and septicaemia), studies have shown that the vaccine can also provide some protection against gonorrhoea. This means that individuals who receive the Bexsero vaccine may have a reduced risk of contracting gonorrhoea compared to those who are not vaccinated.

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, whenever you next attend the clinic. The vaccine is given by injection usually in the upper arm.

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

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

How soon will I be protected?

It takes at least two weeks from your second dose of vaccine for your body to produce antibodies to give you a good level of protection. The vaccine gives around 30-40% protection against gonorrhoea so you must continue to use condoms for protection against gonorrhoea and other sexually transmitted infections such as syphilis.

Will it stop me getting gonorrhoea?

It will not completely stop you from getting gonorrhoea infection, but it will help reduce the chance of infection and passing it on to other partners.

Will it stop me getting meningitis and septicaemia?

Meningitis and septicaemia are rare but severe diseases that can kill or leave people with life changing disabilities and health problems. The vaccine protects against meningitis and septicaemia caused by the MenB bacteria but other bacteria can also cause meningitis and septicaemia so you should still be aware of the signs and symptoms.

www.nidirect.gov.uk/conditions/meningitis

Signs and symptoms

► Gonorrhoea symptoms

- Many people may have no symptoms
- Can include thick yellow discharge from the penis
- Pain on urination

If you are concerned about gonorrhoea infection, contact your local sexual health (GUM) clinic for advice and testing.



Find your local sexual health clinic
sexualhealthni.info/stis/visiting-a-sexual-health-clinic

MenB vaccination record

Record your MenB vaccination date(s) below to ensure that you don't miss out on protection from gonorrhoea. Remember, to be protected you need to complete the full course of the vaccine.

MenB vaccine dose	Date
Dose 1	
Dose 2	



For more information on gonorrhoea and meningococcal disease (meningitis and septicaemia) please visit



Gonorrhoea symptoms and testing
from sexualhealthni.info



Information on meningitis
from nidirect.gov.uk



Meningitis Research Foundation
free helpline 0808 800 3344



Meningitis Now
24 hour helpline 0808 801 0388

If you have any questions speak to your health care adviser.

**Confidential. No judgement.
No shame. No stigma.**



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