



Scottish Paediatric and Adult Haemoglobinopathies Network

Information for the parent/carer of a child with Sickle Cell disease on vaccinations

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Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)

Sickle Cell Disease is an inherited blood condition which can affect various organs in your child's body. One of the organs affected is the spleen which helps the body to fight infections such as pneumonia, septicaemia and meningitis. When sickling occurs in the spleen it causes it to shrink (hyposplenism), which means that it doesn't work as effectively to fight infection.

Staying well with Sickle Cell Disease

The small spleen in children with SCD means that they are more susceptible to severe infections, in particular to those infections caused by certain types of bacteria. Vaccines, along with antibiotics, can protect against some of these harmful bacteria.

Recommended vaccines for people with SCD

Children with SCD should have all the regular childhood vaccinations recommended as per the NHS Childhood Immunisation Schedule, plus a few extras. Your health visitor or GP will be able to inform you of the recommended routine immunisations schedule for your child.

This can also be found on the UK Government web site at the following link: [Routine childhood immunisations schedule from June 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/424242/routine-childhood-immunisation-schedule-from-june-2020.pdf)

Your child's Haematology doctor or Nurse will tell you if your child needs to have any extra vaccinations because of their SCD. Your child's Haematology doctor may ask your GP to arrange for any extra vaccinations or you may be asked to attend the hospital for these to be given by your haematology nurse.

The extra vaccinations recommended for children with SCD are:

- **Influenza vaccine** – given every year from 6 months of age
- **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (sometimes called Prevenar)** – A pneumococcal vaccine which is included in the routine vaccination schedule but two additional doses may be given before & after the child's first birthday
- **Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (sometimes called Pneumovax)** – A pneumococcal vaccine given at age 2 years and then every 5 years
- **Meningococcal vaccines** (Meningococcal ACWY and Meningococcal B, although Men B vaccination is now included in the NHS Childhood Immunisation Schedule for children)
- **Hepatitis B vaccination** from 2 months of age (part of the childhood vaccination programme for all children)

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Some adults and some children with SCD may not have had the vaccines mentioned in the childhood vaccination programme for reasons such as age at diagnosis and /or differences in schedules of other countries. You should discuss this with your haematologist or haematology nurse so that you can be brought up to date with any vaccinations you may have missed.

Further Information

Scottish Paediatric and Adult Haemoglobinopathies Network (SPAH) through the website: spah.scot.nhs.uk

If you require an alternative format, please contact nss.equalitydiversity@nhs.scot, telephone: 0131 275 600

British Sign Language, please contact Scotland BSL: [Contact Scotland \(contactscotland-bsl.org\)](http://contactscotland-bsl.org)