NHS SCOTLAND

SPAH
SCOTTISH PAEDIATRIC AND ADULT HAEMOGLOBINOPATHIES NETWORK

Vaccination information for the parent or carer of a child with Sickle Cell Disease

This document has been prepared by Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland) on behalf of the Scottish Paediatric and Adult Haemoglobinopathies Network (SPAH). Accountable to Scottish Government, PSD Scotland works at the heart of the health service providing national strategic services to the rest of NHS Scotland and other public sector organisations to help them deliver their services more efficiently and effectively. The SPAH Network is a collaboration of stakeholders involved in care of patients with haemoglobinopathies, who are supported by a PSD Scotland Programme Team to drive improvement across the care pathway.

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NSD610-017.41 V3
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Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is an inherited condition that can affect various parts of the body. One affected organ is the spleen. The spleen helps the body fight infections such as pneumonia, sepsis, and meningitis. When sickling occurs in the spleen, it causes it to shrink. This condition, called hyposplenism, reduces its ability to fight infections.

Reducing infection risk in SCD

Children with SCD have smaller spleens which can make them more likely to get serious infections caused by certain types of bacteria. Vaccines, along with antibiotics, can protect against some of these harmful bacteria.

Recommended vaccines for children with SCD

Your child should get all the usual vaccinations for children of their age plus some extra ones. The routine childhood vaccinations are listed in the NHS Childhood Immunisation Schedule.

You can also find this scheduled on the UK Government website - Routine childhood immunisations from 1 January 2026 - GOV.UK

www.gov.uk/government/publications/routine-childhood-immunisation-schedule/routine-childhood-immunisations-from-1-july-2025-babies-born-from-1-july-2024

Your health visitor or GP will be able to answer any questions about routine vaccinations.

Your child's haematology doctor or nurse will tell you if your child needs extra vaccinations. They will arrange these through your local vaccination team.

The extra vaccinations recommended for children with SCD are:

- **Influenza Vaccine:** Administered every year starting from 6 months of age.
- **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (sometimes called Prevenar):** Part of their routine vaccinations. They will also need two more doses in addition to this, one before and one after their first birthday.
- **Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (sometimes called Pneumovax):** Given at 2 years old and then every 5 years.
- **Meningococcal Vaccines:** Meningococcal ACWY and Meningococcal B. Meningococcal B vaccination is now included in the NHS Childhood Immunisation Schedule for all children.

  Meningococcal ACWY is given to all children at around 14 years of age, however, in children with SCD it is recommended they receive this in the first year of life.

- **Hepatitis B Vaccination:** Starting from 2 months of age. This is part of the childhood vaccination programme for all children.

Your child might have missed vaccines due to a later diagnosis, or if they moved to the UK later in childhood. Talk to your child's haematologist or haematology nurse to ensure they receive any vaccines they might have missed.

For more information about SPAH and other helpful resources:

SPAH Website: www.spah.scot.nhs.uk
Email: nss.spah@nhs.scot

If you need this leaflet in another format (such as large print), please:

- Email: psd.contact-us@nhs.scot
- Phone: 0131 275 6000
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Endorsed: April 2026 **Review: April 2029**