What to expect after vaccination: **Babies and children up to 5 years**



This information is a guide only. If you think your child might be seriously ill, trust your instincts and seek urgent medical advice. For more information on vaccine ingredients and links to the patient information leaflet, visit **nhsinform.scot/immunisation**

Call your GP or NHS 24 on 111 if, at any time, your child has a temperature of:

- **38°C or above and is under 3 months old**
- **39°C or above and is 3 months or older**

After your child's vaccinations

Vaccines help keep your child safe from serious diseases. It's normal to have some side effects afterwards, but these are usually mild and a sign that your child's immune system is working to protect them.

You can give your child infant paracetamol if they seem uncomfortable or unwell. Paracetamol is safe for very young children, but for babies aged 2 to 3 months, no more than two doses should be given for non-vaccine fever without checking with a GP or pharmacist. This is to make sure that any fever caused by a serious infection can be quickly diagnosed and treated. Your local pharmacy can give you infant paracetamol for free.

Read the instructions on the product packaging and patient information leaflet very carefully and give your child the correct dose for their age.

How to treat a fever

A baby or child is generally considered to have a fever if their temperature is 38°C or higher. If your child's face feels hot and looks red or flushed, they may have a fever. You can check their temperature with a thermometer.

There's no evidence that bathing your child, sponging them down or putting a fan on will lower their fever.

Fevers are usually mild, so you only need to give a dose of infant paracetamol if your child seems uncomfortable or unwell.

Remember, never give medicines that contain aspirin to children under 16 years old. If you have any questions or concerns, speak to your local pharmacist.

Sometimes, a high fever can cause a febrile seizure or convulsion (a fit). This may happen after any vaccination. Most children recover fully. A fit that occurs a short time after vaccination might not have been caused by the vaccine or the fever. It could be due to a health condition.

Call 999 immediately if your child has a fit. You should also contact your GP, who may refer you to a specialist for advice about further tests and future vaccinations.

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Common side effects

After any vaccination, your child may experience common side effects such as swelling, pain, redness, bruising or a hard lump where the injection was given. They may also be sleepy, irritable or upset, and not as hungry as usual.

After the 6-in-1 vaccine, your child might:

- have diarrhoea or vomiting
- have a mild fever

After the rotavirus vaccine, your child might:

- have mild diarrhoea

In very rare cases, the vaccine may affect your baby's lower gut. They may have tummy pain, vomiting and what looks like redcurrant jelly in their nappies. Call your **GP** or **NHS 24** on **111** immediately if this happens.

As the rotavirus vaccine is given by mouth, it can pass through your baby's gut and be picked up during nappy changes. It's important to wash hands and keep surfaces clean. People with severely weakened immune systems should take extra care around your baby for 2 weeks after vaccination.

After the MMR vaccine, your child might:

- get a mild rash (this rash is not infectious)
- get an upper respiratory tract infection
- get a fever that develops a week or two after the vaccine and lasts 1 to 3 days
- develop swollen glands around the neck, cheeks and jaw that appear 2 to 3 weeks after the vaccine
- have sore or stiff joints that can last from a couple of days to a few weeks

After the pneumococcal vaccine, your child might:

- have a mild fever
- have diarrhoea or vomiting
- get a rash

After the 4-in-1 vaccine, your child might:

- have diarrhoea or vomiting
- have a mild fever
- get sore or swollen joints
- get a sore head

After the MenB vaccine, your child might:

- have sore joints
- get a rash (more common in children aged 12 to 23 months)
- have diarrhoea or vomiting
- have a sore head

Children can get a fever after any vaccination, but especially when the MenB vaccine is given with other routine vaccines at 8 and 12 weeks. Three doses of infant paracetamol can be given to help stop and treat fever. You should space out the doses like this:

Age	Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3
8 weeks and 12 weeks	to be given just before or just after their vaccinations*	4–6 hours after dose 1	4–6 hours after dose 2

* For very premature babies (born before 32 weeks) weighing less than 4 kg, a health professional should prescribe the paracetamol according to the baby's weight at the time of vaccination.

This expert advice on using paracetamol only applies if your baby has had the MenB vaccine with the other routine vaccines at 8 and 12 weeks of age.

If you have any questions, speak to your local pharmacy.

Reporting side effects

You can report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card Scheme by:

- visiting **www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard**
- using the Yellow Card app
- calling **0800 731 6789**.

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Please email **phs.otherformats@phs.scot** for information in other languages and formats.