

# Frequently Asked Questions



## Q WHAT IS TETANUS?

Tetanus is a painful disease affecting the nervous system which can lead to muscle spasms, cause breathing problems, and can kill. It is caused when germs found in the soil and manure get into the body through open cuts or burns. Tetanus cannot be passed from person to person.

## Q WHAT IS DIPHTHERIA?

Diphtheria is a serious disease that usually begins with a sore throat and can quickly cause breathing problems. It can damage the heart and nervous system, and in severe cases, it can kill.

## Q WHAT IS POLIO?

Polio is a virus that attacks the nervous system which can cause permanent paralysis of muscles. If it affects the chest muscles or the brain, polio can kill. The teenage booster vaccine is called Revaxis.

You can read more about the Tetanus Diphtheria Polio vaccine here:

[www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.5581.pdf](http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.5581.pdf)

## Q WHAT ARE MENINGITIS AND SEPTICAEMIA?

Meningitis is dangerous swelling of the lining around the brain and spinal cord. It can be the result of infection with bacteria or a virus or as a result of injury.

Septicaemia is when bacteria enter the bloodstream and cause blood poisoning which can trigger sepsis. Sepsis is an overwhelming and life-threatening immune response to any infection and can lead to tissue damage, organ failure and death.

Meningococcal disease can cause both meningitis and septicaemia. It can lead to life-changing disabilities such as amputations, hearing loss, brain damage and scars. You can read more about the meningitis ACWY vaccine here:

[www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.4118.pdf](http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.4118.pdf)

## Q WHY DOES MY CHILD NEED THIS VACCINE?

The national immunisation programme has meant that dangerous diseases, such as polio, have disappeared in the UK. But these diseases could come back – they are still around in many countries throughout the world. In the UK, such diseases are kept at bay by the high immunisation rates.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The consent form needs to be signed by a person with parental responsibility which includes:



- Mother: automatic
- Father: if married to the mother either when baby is born or marries subsequently
- Unmarried father: if name appears on birth certificate (since 1/12/03) or legally acquired
- Others: if parental responsibility is legally acquired
- Parental Responsibility Agreement: signed, properly witnessed and sent for registration to Principle Registry or the Family Division (High Court)
- Residence Order: granted by the Court

Please note that young people under the age of 16 can give or refuse consent if considered competent to do so by nursing staff.

## Q IF MY CHILD WAS IMMUNISED AGAINST TETANUS, DIPHTHERIA AND POLIO AS A CHILD, ARE THEY STILL FULLY PROTECTED?

No, to follow the UK immunisation schedule, your son or daughter will still need a booster to provide protection against these diseases.

## Q ARE THERE SIDE EFFECTS FROM THESE VACCINES?

It is common to get some swelling, redness or tenderness where you have the injection. Sometimes a small painless lump develops, but this usually disappears in a few weeks. More serious effects are rare but include fever, headache, dizziness, feeling sick and swollen glands. You may experience side effects from the MMR vaccine for up to six weeks after the immunisation. The symptoms are similar to those caused by the diseases, but much milder. Speak to your school nurse or doctor if you are at all concerned.