

Vaccinations given in the Lung Defence Clinic

A patient's guide

Our immune system

One major role of our immune system is to protect us from infection. Recurrent respiratory tract infections (lungs, sinuses and ears) are common features in people with a weakened immune system known as Immunodeficiency.

Antibodies are special chemicals produced by our immune system to help fight infection (bacterial and viral). If you have a problem with your immune system in making antibodies then you will be more prone to infections. Antibodies can be boosted by standard vaccines or replaced by antibody replacement therapy in people with immunodeficiency.

Vaccinations

Standard vaccines are given to boost the levels of antibodies against infections. We combine standard vaccines with blood tests to show whether antibody levels are boosted or not, as in immunodeficiency.

Vaccinations are considered as treatment and are recommended by the Department of Health to provide individual protection against serious disease.

The flu and pneumonia vaccine are routinely offered to patients with respiratory disease and or heart disease.

Vaccinations are important in helping to prevent infection against many diseases, but do not cause the disease itself. Vaccinations can be used as a way to see how the immune system is working by measuring the antibody response in blood samples.

You may be offered one or more of the following vaccines the Lung Defence Clinic:

- **Menitorix®**
A combined vaccine as recommended for use in adults, containing low dose haemophilus influenza type b (Hib) and capsular polysaccharide of Neisseria meningitidis group C linked to tetanus toxoid.
- **Revaxis®**
A combined vaccine as recommended for use in adults, absorbed low dose diphtheria, tetanus and inactivated poliomyelitis vaccine.
- **Pneumovax® II**
Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (23 serotypes).
- **Influenzae vaccine**
Given during flu season usually by your GP.
- **Prevenar 13®**
Pneumococcal 13-valent conjugate vaccine.

How are the vaccines given?

All the vaccinations we give are in the form of an injection and are usually given in the top of the arms or top of the thighs. If you require more than one vaccine we will give them in different sites.

Once you have been given the vaccinations we will ask you to stay in the department for about 10 minutes. We ask you to wait with us to make sure that you do not have a reaction to the vaccine.

Reactions are very rare and the most common side effects are discomfort at the injection site, redness and swelling. These usually go away after a day or so. The nurse will explain in more detail about the side effects of the vaccines before she gives them.

Once I have had the vaccinations how will I know if they have worked?

We will ask you to have a blood test four to six weeks after your vaccinations. We can help you arrange this blood test with your practice nurse at your GP surgery and give you the right blood forms, and a pre-paid transport box to allow you to send the blood test in the post.

Sometimes you may have an appointment back at the Lung Defence Clinic within this time period and we can take a blood test then.

It is very important to have a blood test to measure your antibody response during this time frame as we know that in patients with a normal immune system they should have made the protective antibodies by then. If a blood test is taken too early or too late the results may not be correct.

The results of the test vaccines take approximately two weeks, and for the flu vaccine response a lot longer. We normally give the results of your blood tests at your next routine clinic appointment.

Any questions?

If you have any questions about vaccinations please ask the medical or nursing staff of the Lung Defence team, or contact the Immunology/Lung Defence Nurse Specialists between the hours of 9.30-12.30, Monday to Friday.

Contact numbers

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or

01480 830541 and ask for bleep 685.

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