



## Immunisation for individuals with asplenia and splenic dysfunction

Following the death of a young asplenic patient in 2016 from pneumococcal septicaemia in Nottinghamshire a follow up action was for their local GP practices to audit whether other patients with splenic dysfunction had been vaccinated in accordance with the guidance. The results highlighted that a significant number of patients with splenic dysfunction had not received vaccinations as recommended and that most GP practices did not have suitable systems for following up patients.

It was felt that it would be useful to highlight this issue so that GP practices could carry out similar audits and check they have suitable systems in place.

All patients with absent or dysfunctional spleens should be vaccinated according in accordance with the national schedule due their high risk of infection. The Green Book ([Chapter 7](#)) highlights that homozygous sickle cell disease, other haemoglobinopathies and coeliac syndrome can may lead to splenic dysfunction and patients with these conditions should be vaccinated with the same schedule as asplenic patients.

### **The following vaccination schedule is advised for patients with asplenia or dysfunction of the spleen (including sickle cell and coeliac disease):**

- A dose of Haemophilus Influenzae Type b (Hib) and Meningitis C (Hib/MenC)
- A dose of Meningitis A, C, W and Y (MenACWY) conjugate vaccine (at least one month after Hib/MenC)
- A dose of Pneumococcal Polysaccharide (PPV23) **and one every five years thereafter.**
- Two doses of Meningitis B (MenB) vaccine, at least a month apart
- Flu vaccine should be given annually

There is no upper age restriction for these vaccinations. Practices are encouraged to go through their practice lists and identify any patients who are asplenic or hyposplenic. The Medicines Management Team can assist practices in searching for such patients. Patients who have not received all the vaccines in the schedule above should be invited to attend to complete the schedule. A recall system will need to be set up for the 5-yearly repeat of the pneumococcal vaccination.

### **PGDs and PSDs:**

Vaccinating patients who are asplenic or diagnosed with splenic dysfunction is not covered by Patient Group Directions (PGDs). However this could be done under Patient Specific Direction (PSD). This is a written instruction (e.g. prescription or written or electronic instruction in the patient's medical record) from a doctor or independent prescriber for a medicine to be supplied or administered to a named patient.

A PSD must include

- Name of patient
- Name and dose of the prescribed medication to be administered
- Evidence that the patient has been individually assessed by the prescriber for suitability to receive the vaccine

### **Resources:**

The Department of health has produced a patient leaflet and card for patients who have undergone a splenectomy or who do not have a functioning spleen. The leaflet details what patients should do if they have had their spleen removed or if it doesn't work and includes what immunisations are required. Copies can be [downloaded](#) from the gov.uk website or ordered [here](#).