

BCG Referral

Advice sheet for parents (page 1 of 2)



If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

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This leaflet is about the BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guérin) vaccination that is being offered to protect your baby against tuberculosis (TB).

What is the BCG vaccine?

The BCG vaccine contains a weakened form of the bacteria (germs) that cause tuberculosis (TB). As it is weakened it doesn't cause TB but it helps your baby to develop protection (immunity) against TB if he or she comes into contact with it.

The vaccine currently used is Intervax (which has been used effectively in many countries around the world since 1991, although it is classed as an unlicensed product in the UK). Further information can be found online at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544537/PHE_BCG_Child_vaccine_A5.pdf

Why is my baby being offered BCG?

In the UK, like many other countries, BCG is offered to babies who are more likely than the general population to come into contact with someone with TB. This is because they either live in an area with high rates of TB or their parents or grandparents came from a country with high rates of TB.

Are there any reasons why my baby shouldn't have the BCG vaccination?

As with most other immunisations, the injection should not be given or should be delayed if your baby:

- has a high fever
- is having treatment for cancer or other serious conditions that weaken the immune system
- is HIV positive, or
- is suffering from a generalised infected skin condition. If eczema is present, the injection will be given in an area that is free from skin lesions.

Children's Outpatient Department
☎ 01722 336262 ext. 2275

Are there any side effects?

Immediately after the injection, a raised blister will appear. This shows that the injection has been given properly.

Within 2 to 6 weeks of the injection a small spot will appear. This may be quite sore for a few days, but it should gradually heal if you don't cover it. It may leave a small scar.

Occasionally, your baby may develop a shallow sore where they had the injection. If this is oozing fluid and needs to be covered, use a dry dressing – never a plaster – until a scab forms. This wound is rarely a sign of infection, usually it means the body has had a good response to the vaccine. This sore may take as long as several months to heal. If you are worried you should see your GP.

What happens next?

You will receive a letter in the post for an appointment to attend the Children's Outpatient Clinic to have the vaccine from 6 weeks of age onwards.

What to expect when you attend?

- The appointment will take a maximum of 30 minutes.
- Please bring your red book with you.
- Your child needs to be kept still so a member of staff will hold them while the vaccine given by a small injection just under the skin, into the left upper arm.
- The vaccine should not cause a fever and so Calpol (paracetamol) is not required.

Further information

If you have any questions, require translation or do not receive a clinic appointment, please call Children's Outpatient Department 01722 336262 ext 2275