Watch out for meningitis and septicaemia (blood poisoning)
The Meningococcal C and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) vaccines protect against two infections. These infections can cause meningitis and septicaemia. However, the vaccines do not protect against any other types of infection which can also cause these conditions, so it is important to know the signs and symptoms of the disease.

In babies, look out for one or more of the following symptoms:
- a high-pitched, moaning cry
- refusing feeds
- being difficult to wake
- pale or blotchy skin
- a temperature of 38°C or above, and
- red or purple spots that do not fade under pressure.

You can also do the glass test. Press the side of a clear glass against the rash and see if the rash fades and loses colour. If it doesn’t, contact your doctor immediately.

Are there any reasons why my child should not be immunised?
The only reasons for not having your child immunised are:
- a high fever, or
- a bad reaction to any other immunisation.
Live vaccines (polio, BCG and MMR) should not be given if your child:
- is being treated for cancer
- is taking any medicine that affects the immune system, for example immunosuppressants or high-dose steroids, or
- has an illness which affects the immune system.
Talk to your doctor, practice nurse or health visitor if you are concerned.

Travel advice for children
Your child may need extra immunisations if they are going abroad. Contact your doctor or a travel clinic for up-to-date information on the immunisations your child may need.

Further information
The following leaflets contain further information on vaccines and the diseases they protect against. They are available from your local GP surgery or health centre:
- A guide to pre-school immunisations for 3 to 5 year olds
- MMR – The Facts
You can also:
- visit www.immunisation.nhs.uk
- visit www.mmrthefacts.nhs.uk
- call NHS Direct on 0845 46 46 47
### Immunisations for babies up to 15 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aged 2, 3 and 4 months</th>
<th>How it is given</th>
<th>Common side effects</th>
<th>Booster (top-up dose)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DTP-Hib vaccine</td>
<td>Injection</td>
<td>Possible small lump where the injection is given</td>
<td>Given for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis before children start school, and again for diphtheria and tetanus between the ages of 13 and 18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (whooping cough) and Hib)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sight fever within 48 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polo vaccine</td>
<td>By mouth</td>
<td>No common side effects</td>
<td>Given before children start school, and again between the ages of 13 and 18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MenC vaccine</td>
<td>Injection</td>
<td>Possible redness and swelling where the injection is given</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Meningitis C)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Irritability or a mild fever</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Around 13 months

| MMR vaccine           | Injection | Fever and measles-like rash, 7-10 days after injection | A second dose is given before children start school. |
| (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) | | | |

For more details on diseases and side effects, see the booklet *A new guide to childhood immunisations for babies up to 15 months*.

#### Dealing with side effects

A few babies may develop a mild fever. You can keep your child cool by:
- gently sponging them with lukewarm water
- making sure they don't have too many layers of clothes and blankets
- giving them plenty of cool drinks, and
- giving them paracetamol liquid, such as Calpol, Disprin or Medrol. Do not give aspirin to children under 16.

If your child's face feels hot to the touch, or if your child becomes ill, trust your instincts and ask your doctor for advice. Or call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47.

#### Fits

Sometimes, babies have fits a day or two after their DTP-Hib vaccination. If your baby has a fit, call your doctor immediately. Babies usually recover quickly and fully from fits.

#### What is immunisation?

Immunisation is a way of protecting ourselves from serious disease. Once we have been immunised, our bodies are more able to fight those diseases if we come into contact with them. Babies and young children particularly need the benefit that immunisation can give them.

Because of immunisation, many serious diseases have almost disappeared from the UK. However, they are still around in other countries and they could come back if children are not immunised.

It is important to stick to the recommended timetable, as this will give your child the best protection. However, it is never too late to have your child immunised, even if they are older than the recommended ages. Your child is at risk if they have not been immunised.

#### How does immunisation work?

Your child will be given a vaccine. A vaccine contains a small part of the bacteria or virus that causes a disease, or tiny amounts of the chemicals that the bacteria produce. The vaccine will encourage the body's immune (protection) system to make antibodies. These work against the disease if your child comes into contact with it.

Some immunisations have to be given more than once to build up your child's immunity. This top-up dose is sometimes called a booster.