



Vaccine supply special edition

BCG vaccine ordering temporarily on hold

PHE is currently experiencing delays with the supply of BCG vaccine from the manufacturer and routine ordering through ImmForm has now been stopped. We expect to open ordering again in May. Please note that each pack of BCG vaccine contains ten vials with a minimum of ten doses per vial (i.e. 100 doses) and efforts should be made to ensure efficient use of existing stocks to avoid wastage.

In an effort to prioritise the limited stock, the most effective use of BCG vaccine is for the protection of very young individuals to prevent military tuberculosis and tuberculosis meningitis. As set out in the Tuberculosis chapter of Immunisation against infectious disease - the Green Book (see [web link 1](#)) the following children should be offered vaccination under the childhood vaccination programme:

- a. all infants (aged 0 to 12 months) living in areas of the UK where the annual incidence of TB is 40/100,000 or greater¹.
- b. all infants (aged 0 to 12 months) with a parent or grandparent who was born in a country where the annual incidence of TB is 40/100,000 or greater².
- c. previously unvaccinated children aged one to five years with a parent or grandparent who was born in a country where the annual incidence of TB is 40/100,000 or greater². These children should be identified at suitable opportunities, and can normally be vaccinated without tuberculin testing.
- d. previously unvaccinated, tuberculin-negative children aged from six to under 16 years of age with a parent or grandparent who was born in a country where the annual incidence of TB is 40/100,000 or greater². These children should be identified at suitable opportunities, tuberculin tested and vaccinated if negative (see section on tuberculin testing prior to BCG vaccination).
- e. previously unvaccinated tuberculin-negative individuals under 16 years of age who are contacts of cases of respiratory TB (following recommended contact management advice – see [web link 2](#)).
- f. previously unvaccinated, tuberculin-negative individuals under 16 years of age who were born in or who have lived for a prolonged period (at least three months) in a country with an annual TB incidence of 40/100,000 or greater².

¹ Universal vaccination operates in areas of the country where the TB incidence is 40/100,000 or greater. This is applied for operational reasons since these geographical areas generally have a high concentration of families who come from regions of the world where the TB incidence is 40/100,000 or greater. The decision to introduce universal vaccination in an area is based on geography in order to target vaccination to children who may be at increased risk of TB in an effective way. It does not imply that living in areas that have an incidence of TB 40/100,000 or greater puts children at increased risk of TB infection. This is because most infections of children are likely to occur in household settings. Further, there has been little evidence of TB transmission in schools in the UK.

² For country information on prevalence see [web link 3](#).

Colleagues should consider prioritising the youngest infants for vaccination (groups a. and b. above). The next highest priority are young children aged under five (group c.), particularly if they are contacts of active cases (group e.). Other risk groups under 16 years are the next highest priority (groups d. e. and f.). For those who require BCG vaccine urgently, you should contact the ImmForm helpdesk on 0844 376 0040 in the first instance.

Vaccination for occupational health reasons should be given a lower priority and travellers over 16 years of age given lowest priority. Repeated BCG vaccination is ineffective and may cause adverse effects and should be avoided.

Web links

- web link 1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book>
- web link 2 <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg117>
- web link 3 www.who.int/tb/country/data/profiles/en/index.html