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27 March 2014

PHE Gateway: 2013 554

Dear Colleague,

**Meningococcal C Conjugate Vaccine – Information about the ‘freshers’ dose.**

A letter outlining the changes to the Men C vaccination schedule was issued on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013. In summary the changes were to:

- remove the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose at the age of 16 weeks from the routine schedule for infants (effective from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2013)
- Introduce an adolescent booster at around 14 years of age (introduced in the 2013/14 academic year).

**Freshers’ dose.**

The letter also outlined a time limited catch-up programme to offer the vaccine to first time university entrants under the age of 25 years, i.e. those who will not have been vaccinated under the revised schedule at around 14 years.

This letter provides important information about this element of the programme. Key points include:

- The MenC dose will be offered to all young people aged between 17 and 25 years who are entering university for the first time: those who have never received Men C vaccination or were previously last vaccinated at pre-school

age are eligible.<sup>1</sup> For simplicity, however, any 'freshers' in the 17-25 year age group who request vaccination can be vaccinated and GPs claim the fee of £7.64.

- The vaccination is a single dose and any MenC vaccine is suitable. Neisvac C® is currently available through the Immform website for this programme. <https://www.immform.dh.gov.uk/SignIn.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f>
- Prospective students will be informed through UCAS (<http://www.ucas.com>) that they are eligible for the vaccine. However, practices are able to offer the vaccine opportunistically to those young people who are expecting to go to university.
- The emphasis will be on patients requesting the vaccination – practices will not be required to identify or contact prospective patients
- An information leaflet has been developed. This leaflet can be used as part of the consent process. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/meningococcal-c-menc-vaccination-programme>)
- The Men C Q&A for healthcare professionals has been updated to reflect questions about the fresher's dose. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/meningococcal-c-menc-vaccination-programme>)
- The booster is not required in those who received an adolescent booster dose of MenC (defined as any dose given after the age of 10 years). Therefore the majority of the 'freshers' programmes will be completed in three years (after which those commencing university will have been offered MenC as part of the adolescent booster).
- This will form part of an NHS England enhanced service agreed with the General Practitioners Committee of the British Medical Association.

If you have any further queries please email them to [immunisation@phe.gov.uk](mailto:immunisation@phe.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

*Mary Ramsay*

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<sup>1</sup> Students born before 1<sup>st</sup> September 1995 and vaccinated in the national schools campaign in 2000 are likely to still be protected from that dose.