

Preventing a high temperature after vaccination

Some babies may get a raised temperature or fever (over 37.5°C) after having their vaccinations. This is more common after the MenB vaccine. To help prevent this it is recommended that babies are given three doses of infant paracetamol after their MenB vaccines at two and four months of age (or at three months for those babies getting the catch-up vaccination in September). Giving paracetamol will reduce the risk of fever, irritability and general discomfort (including pain at the site of the injection) after the MenB vaccination. **It is important to make sure you have some infant paracetamol at home before your baby has his/her first vaccine. If you haven't got any then you can get some on your way home.**

Where can I get infant paracetamol from?

Paracetamol liquid is very widely available from chemists and supermarkets. You can buy an

own brand (usually cheaper) or a brand such as Calpol®. It doesn't matter which brand you choose to give but it is important you make sure you get the right strength for your baby.

When should I give the paracetamol to my baby?

You should give the first dose as soon as you get home, or as soon after the MenB vaccination as possible. Then give the second dose four to six hours after the first one, and the third dose four to six hours after the second. Don't give the first dose before your vaccine visit, because your nurse will first need to check that your child doesn't have signs of an existing infection, which can sometimes be a reason to delay your vaccines.

How much should I give?

Each dose is 2.5ml. The bottle you buy should have either a syringe or spoon for measuring the dose correctly (see below).

Dosage and timing of infant paracetamol suspension (120mg/5ml) for use after vaccination at two and four months (or at three months for those babies getting the catch-up vaccination in September)

Age of baby	Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3
2 months/ 4 months	One 2.5 ml by syringe or spoonful (small end) as soon as possible after vaccination	One 2.5 ml by syringe or spoonful (small end) 4–6 hours after first dose	One 2.5 ml by syringe or spoonful (small end) 4–6 hours after second dose

It's important that your baby has the recommended three doses of paracetamol after each of the first two MenB vaccinations to reduce the chances of fever.

If your baby spits out more than half the paracetamol within a few minutes of getting it, then you can give the same amount of paracetamol again straight away.

Is it safe to give paracetamol to such a young baby?

Yes, paracetamol can safely be given to two month old babies. You may find the information on the bottle of paracetamol says that no more than two doses should be given to children aged two to three months without talking to a doctor or pharmacist. Recently, however, experts from the Joint Committee for Vaccinations and Immunisations and the Committee for Human Medicines have advised that after the vaccines given at two months of age it is safe to give paracetamol for up to 48 hours (leaving at least four hours between doses and without giving more than four doses each day). This is because it is much more likely that any mild fever within this time after the vaccines was caused by the vaccine rather than an infection and the paracetamol will make your child feel better. The advice on the paracetamol patient information is expected to be changed in due course.

What if my baby still has a fever after having had the three doses of paracetamol?

Some babies may still develop fever after vaccination, even after taking paracetamol. If your baby still has a fever after the first three doses of paracetamol but is otherwise well, you can continue giving paracetamol for up to 48 hours after the vaccination. You should always leave at least four hours between doses and never give more than four doses in a day. You should also keep your child cool by making sure they don't have too many layers of clothes or blankets on, and giving them plenty of fluids.

If you are concerned about your baby at any time then trust your instincts and speak to your GP.

If 48 hours after vaccination your baby still has a fever, or you are worried they are unwell, you should speak to your GP for advice.



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