

British infants to get meningitis vaccine

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British health officials are beginning an immunization program designed to prevent infants and young children from contacting meningitis and septicemia.

A vaccine to prevent pneumococcal disease will now be given to infants at 2, 4 and 13 months as part of regular immunizations, the London Telegraph reports.

In addition to killing 20 percent of its victims, pneumococcal disease can cause brain damage, deafness and epilepsy in those who survive.

Of the 530 cases recorded in England and Wales last year, 150 to 200 were infants under the age of two.

Symptoms of meningitis include stiff neck, extreme drowsiness and lack of appetite.

For infants a high-pitched cry and not wanting to be handled may also be evidence of the illness.

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