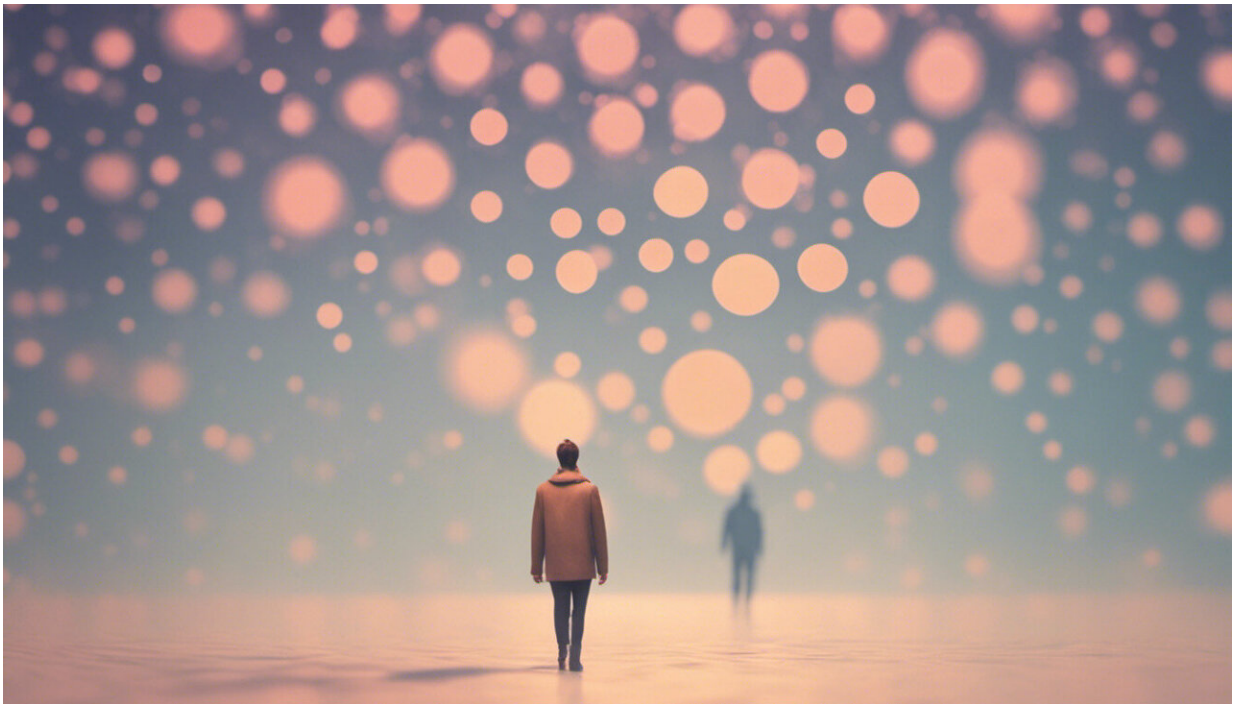


Meningitis B vaccine trial for teenagers launched

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

The NHS is inviting teenagers to take part in a study to see whether giving a group B meningococcal (MenB) vaccine to teenagers reduces carriage of this bacteria in their throat, potentially providing protection to all ages from this dangerous infection.

Researchers are working with schools around the county to find 24,000 volunteers aged 16 to 18 years to take part in the Be on the TEAM (Teenagers Against Meningitis) trial, led by the Oxford Vaccine Group at the University of Oxford with funding and support from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

Bacteria in the throat can cause meningitis (inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning), both of which can be fatal or cause long lasting damage. The age groups most at risk of meningitis are babies, pre-school children and teenagers.

While 13- to 14-year-olds currently receive a [vaccine](#) against group A, C, W and Y meningococcus, immunisation against MenB is currently targeted at babies as they are at highest risk.

All teenagers taking part in the study will receive two doses of a MenB vaccine. They will also have two throat swabs taken 12 months apart. The research team will look to see if the vaccines reduce the numbers of students carrying the meningitis-causing bacteria in their throat.

The trial will take place in three groups using two licensed MenB vaccines, 4CMenB (Bexsero) and MenB-fHBP (Trumenba). One group of 8,000 will get 4CMenB while another 8,000 will get MenB-fHBP. The vaccines will be given at the start of the study and six months later.

A further 8,000 youngsters will act as a 'control group' and not get the vaccine at first, so swabs can be taken 12 months apart and results compared to those who do get the vaccine, to examine the difference. The control group will get the 4CMenB vaccine after they have had the swabs taken, so they benefit from the protection it provides.

The trial is voluntary and will be conducted through schools in at least 14 towns and cities in England, Scotland and Wales with each enrolling

students to one study group. Students can give their own consent. The study will be recruiting over 18 months from April 2018.

Dr. Matthew Snape, of the University's Oxford Vaccine Group, said: "This is a really exciting opportunity for teenagers to 'Be on the TEAM' and take part in this important study, which is being funded and supported by the NIHR. Participants will not only get a vaccine that reduces their risk of meningitis but also help us understand if we can prevent the bug being carried and potentially spread to others."

Amy Davis, from Fleet, Hampshire, was 18 when she fell ill with meningococcal B septicaemia in 2011. She had gone to bed with what seemed like the flu but woke up in the night with severe aches and pains and feeling confused.

She later collapsed and an ambulance was called when her parents noticed she was deteriorating and slipping in and out of consciousness. Amy received urgent medical treatment which saved her life. During a long recovery period it was clear that septicaemia had affected Amy's arms and legs and she later had to have her left leg amputated below the knee.

Amy, now 25, said: "Meningitis and septicaemia is something nobody should have to experience. By taking part in this study young people will get the MenB vaccination.

"It will help protect them from the type of meningitis that almost killed me. I'm encouraging all those offered the vaccine to have it. It could save their life."

Vinny Smith, Chief Executive at Meningitis Research Foundation said: "It's fantastic news that this study is now starting. Not only will it give a number of young people the chance to be protected against MenB, we'll

also find out more about the potential to protect the whole population because this age group play a key role in the spread of the bacteria to others."

Dr. Tom Nutt, chief executive of charity Meningitis Now, said: "This important study is a chance for [young people](#) to make a real difference to not only their own health but that of their wider community.

"We're delighted to see this vaccine trial being rolled out and would urge everyone who can to get involved and help make a real difference in the fight against [meningitis](#)."

Provided by University of Oxford

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