



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Vaccination advice for people with Coeliac Disease

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

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Are there some vaccinations that people with coeliac disease should have?

Yes, the Pneumococcal Vaccine is recommended for all people who have coeliac disease.

We would also recommend the Meningitis C, Haemophilus influenzae B (HIB) and Flu vaccinations.

The research to date suggests there does not appear to be an increased risk of catching COVID 19 for people with coeliac disease. Therefore there are no specific recommendations regarding COVID 19 vaccination and people with coeliac disease

Please note that the Health Advisory Council of Coeliac UK is currently reviewing these recommendations so they may change in the near future.

Why is the Pneumococcal vaccination recommended?

Pneumococcal disease is an infection caused by a bacterium that usually lives harmlessly at the back of many people's throats. However, it can invade other parts of the body and cause serious, possibly life threatening illnesses including pneumonia, septicaemia or meningitis.

The Department of Health recommends the following people receive a vaccination for pneumococcal disease:

- Infants
- People aged 65 and over.
- People aged between two and 65 years of age who are at higher risk from pneumococcal disease, including individuals with either an absent spleen or spleen that does not work as well as it should because of a medical condition.
- Children and adults with certain long term health conditions such as serious heart, liver and kidney conditions, and diabetes.

Since 2006, all infants receive vaccination against pneumococcal infection as part of the routine childhood immunisation programme. Therefore, at the moment, the recommendation is a one off vaccination for those born before 2006.

Coeliac UK and the British Society of Gastroenterology recommend that everyone with coeliac disease is vaccinated against pneumococcal infection, as there is a small but definite increased risk in patients with coeliac disease of their spleen not working as well as it should (this is called functional hyposplenism).

Are seasonal Flu vaccinations required?

If you have coeliac disease you are not at increased risk of flu (it is carried by a virus not bacteria).

If you have coeliac disease, vaccination against seasonal flu needs to be considered on an individual basis.

It is recommended that pregnant women and people who are hyposplenic are offered the seasonal flu vaccination as a common complication of flu is secondary pneumococcal infection.

If you are concerned about flu, speak to your GP.

What is hyposplenism?

Hyposplenism is when the spleen does not work properly due to certain diseases including some patients with coeliac disease. Hyposplenism also occurs after surgical removal of the spleen.

The spleen is an organ in the body which is a key part of your body's immune system.

People who are hyposplenic are potentially at greater risk of developing certain infections.

How do I know if I am hyposplenic?

It is known that some adults with coeliac disease have been found to be hyposplenic. The incidence of this is not known.

It is difficult to know who these people are so it can be safer to provide the appropriate vaccinations if spleen status is unknown.

Those people who are known to be hyposplenic should receive the pneumococcal vaccine and also vaccines against meningitis C, HIB and flu.

Please contact your GP if you have further questions.

Useful contacts

Coeliac UK
www.coeliac.org.uk
Tel: 0333 332 2033

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Admin Team, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE, telephone 01904 725269 or email nutrition&dietetics@york.nhs.uk.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

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