

## Tamariki under 5 years old who haven't had the MenB vaccine

If your pēpi received their 3-month, 5-month, or 12-month scheduled vaccines before 1 March 2023, then they won't have received the MenB vaccine. But they can catch up.

All tamariki under 5 years old, who have not been fully immunised against MenB, **can catch up for free until 31 August 2025**.

Just contact your doctor, nurse, or healthcare provider and make a plan as to when they can catch up.

### Side effects

Like most medicines, vaccines can sometimes cause reactions. These are usually mild, and not everyone will get them.

The most common reactions to MenB immunisation include a fever, pain or swelling where the needle went in, headache, and feeling generally unwell and tired.

The chance of having a serious side effect from the MenB vaccine is extremely low.



For more information about getting your tamariki immunised against MenB

- talk to your doctor, nurse, or healthcare provider
- call Healthline on **0800 611 116**
- [immunise.health.nz/meningococcal](https://immunise.health.nz/meningococcal)



## Tamariki under 5 years

Protect them against  
**meningococcal disease**

**Te Aka Whai Ora**  
Māori Health Authority

**Te Whatu Ora**  
Health New Zealand

Babies and tamariki under 5-years-old are at higher risk of getting meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal disease can be life-threatening, but you can protect them. FREE meningococcal B (MenB) vaccines are available for all tamariki under 5 years old.

## What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is an infection caused by bacteria. It can lead to very serious illnesses including:

**meningitis** – an infection of the membranes that cover the brain and spinal cord

**septicaemia** – blood poisoning.

Bacteria are spread in a similar way to the common cold – by coughing and sneezing, or from contact with saliva (spit), for example from contact with baby dribble, or sharing food or toys.

## How serious is it?

Meningococcal disease can be life-threatening.

It can develop and become deadly in **just a few hours**.

People who survive meningococcal disease often have serious long-term effects, including amputation of limbs, hearing loss, seizures, brain injury, and permanent skin scarring.

## How to protect your tamariki

Vaccination protects your tamariki and helps stop it spreading to others. Tamariki need 2 or 3 doses of the MenB vaccine to be protected, depending on how old they are when they have their first dose.

## When should my pēpi be immunised?

The MenB vaccine is part of the National Immunisation Schedule for babies at 3 months, 5 months, and 12 months old. Your pēpi will be offered the MenB vaccine as part of their usual scheduled immunisations.

## Paracetamol for pēpi under 2 years old

The MenB vaccine can cause quite high fevers – particularly for pēpi under 2 years old. To prevent and treat fever after having the MenB vaccine, it is recommended to give paracetamol just before or at the immunisation appointment.

It's important to give the correct amount of paracetamol to your pēpi. Contact your vaccinator if you need guidance on dosage before your appointment.