

MMR 1 off '6 inoculation' jabs introduced to babies on 'super vaccination' day

By David Derbyshire

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Single surgery visit: Toddlers are to be inoculated against six diseases at once in a bid to boost vaccination rates

Toddlers are to be inoculated against six diseases at once in a bid to boost vaccination rates, the Government revealed yesterday.

The chief medical officer has told GPs to give the vaccines – including the MMR jab – during a single surgery visit once a baby has passed his or her first birthday.

The 'super-vaccination' day will involve three injections to protect against measles, mumps, rubella, two forms of meningitis and bacteria that can cause pneumonia.

Under the existing NHS timetable, a month normally separates the two meningitis jabs from the other vaccinations. The official advice was sent out to GPs in England and Wales last week.

The Government believes the change will simplify the complicated immunisation schedule and boost the uptake of vaccines after the MMR scare.

Yesterday the Department of Health said there was no risk to children from having all the jabs on the same day – and stressed that anxious parents would still be able to split

the jabs over two visits.

Some parents will welcome one fewer visits to the doctor. Under the existing programme, parents have to make six appointments for a total of 13 injections before their child's fourth birthday.

However, others will be concerned about the extra health risks and discomfort of having three jabs in one day.

A vaccine can trigger side effects including pain at the site of injection, fever, irritability, stomach upsets and headaches. In extremely rare cases, children can suffer allergic reactions.

In her letter, the chief medical officer Prof Dame Sally Davies called for the change to be introduced 'as soon as practicable' to simplify the system.

Doctors say the first super-vaccination day could be introduced by the start of next year.

The change was proposed by the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation after research found combining the jabs on one day would cause no health problems for babies.

The committee's research – based on detailed interviews with a small number of mothers and fathers – also found that the change would be 'acceptable to parents'.

Under the current schedule babies are given a combined booster jab for meningitis C and Hib – a bacterial infection that can cause meningitis or severe pneumonia in small children.

Four weeks later they are invited back for the MMR triple vaccine and a third booster for pneumococcal infection.

GPs will now give all three jabs at the same appointment.

The Department of Health said parents would not be forced to have all the jabs at the same time.

A spokesman said: 'Independent scientific research has shown that this is completely safe and effective.'

Excerpted from *MMR 1 off '6 inoculation' jabs introduced to babies on 'super vaccination' day | Mail Online*
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1331738/MMR-1-6-inoculation-jabs-introduced-babies-super-vaccination-day.html>

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