# England launches world's first gonorrhoea vaccine to prevent 100,000 infections



England is set to become the first country to introduce a vaccination programme against gonorrhoea. Hooray! The vaccine rollout, set to begin in August, will primarily target gay and bisexual men with multiple sexual partners or a history of STIs as gonorrhoea cases have surged to over 85,000 in 2023 - a record high since records began in 1918.

Gonorrhoea, which is often symptomless, can result in severe health complications, including pain, unusual discharge, and infertility. The vaccine being deployed is based on the meningitis B vaccine, known as 4CMenB, which has shown an estimated effectiveness of 30-40% against gonorrhoea. While this may seem limited, health experts believe its implementation could have a profound impact on controlling infection rates. Research projections by Imperial College London suggest that if uptake is high, the vaccine could prevent up to 100,000 infections and save the NHS close to £8 million over the coming decade.

Max, a sexual health campaigner diagnosed with gonorrhoea twice within a year, expressed strong support for the initiative, stating he would '100%' get the vaccine. Prof. Matt Phillips from the British Association for Sexual Health and HIV described the announcement as a 'landmark moment' for sexual health in England.

The impetus for this vaccination programme is also a proactive measure against increasingly antibiotic-resistant strains of gonorrhoea. The bacterium responsible has a long history of evolving resistance to treatments, rendering some cases incredibly challenging to manage. With this backdrop, Dr Amanda Doyle from NHS England noted the vaccine's critical role in protecting individuals and curbing the spread of infection, particularly in an environment where gonorrhoea risk is heightened. The 4CMenB vaccine will not completely eliminate the risk of contracting gonorrhoea, however.

Although the initial rollout is tailored for high-risk groups, like gay men, clinicians will retain discretion to offer the vaccine to other patients considered at risk. Additionally, individuals may receive other vaccinations, such as those for mpox, HPV, and hepatitis, alongside the gonorrhoea jab. Public Health Scotland is also reportedly working on launching a similar programme to improve health outcomes for at-risk populations in Scotland, while responses from health bodies in Wales and Northern Ireland regarding possible initiatives have yet to be confirmed.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cded26z16leo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cded26z16leo> - England is set to become the first country to vaccinate against gonorrhoea, focusing on gay and bisexual men with multiple sexual partners or a history of STIs. The vaccine, derived from the meningitis B vaccine, is 30-40% effective and aims to address the record high of over 85,000 cases in 2023. Projections suggest it could prevent 100,000 cases and save nearly £8 million over the next decade. Vaccination is scheduled to begin in August through sexual health services.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jcvi-advises-on-gonorrhea-and-mpox-vaccinations> - The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended routine targeted vaccination programmes for gonorrhoea and mpox. These programmes should be offered through specialist sexual health services to individuals at increased risk of infection, including gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM). The gonorrhoea vaccination would utilize the 4CMenB vaccine, currently used to prevent meningococcal disease, due to the genetic similarity between Neisseria meningitidis and Neisseria gonorrhoeae.
* <https://www.aidsmap.com/news/nov-2023/uk-vaccine-body-recommends-meningitis-b-vaccine-gonorrhoea-prevention> - The UK's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended offering the 4CMenB vaccine (Bexsero) to individuals at increased risk of contracting gonorrhoea. This decision is based on evidence from observational studies in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States, which showed that the vaccine provides some cross-protection against gonorrhoea. The recommendation is pending review by the Department of Health and Social Care before implementation through sexual health clinics.
* <https://www.bashh.org/news/1675/bashh_calls_for_urgent_national_response_to_concerning_rise_in_antibioticresistant_gonorrhoea_cases_in_england> - The British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) has called for an urgent national response to the rising cases of antibiotic-resistant gonorrhoea in England. New data indicates an increase in both ceftriaxone-resistant and extensively drug-resistant (XDR) gonorrhoea strains. Despite the JCVI's recommendation for a targeted roll-out of the 4CMenB vaccine in November 2023, a policy decision has yet to be made. BASHH urges the government to commit to a sexual health strategy to address the growing threat of treatment-resistant gonorrhoea.
* <https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/public-health/world-first-gonorrhoea-vaccination-scheme-advised-in-uk-13-11-2023/> - The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended a routine vaccination programme for gonorrhoea, marking a world-first initiative. The programme would use the 4CMenB vaccine, currently used to prevent meningococcal disease, due to the genetic similarity between Neisseria meningitidis and Neisseria gonorrhoeae. The vaccination should be offered through specialist sexual health services to individuals at increased risk, including gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM).