

# South West Vaccination & Screening Bulletin

  
South West Collaborative  
Commissioning Hub



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**Contents:**

## SCREENING:

- Learning from incidents affecting immunisation and cervical sample-taker training

## VACCINATIONS:

- Pneumococcal vaccination eligibility for those with Coeliac Disease

## COVID-19:

- Reminder: COVID-19 vaccine expiry dates

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### **SCREENING:**

#### **Learning from incidents affecting immunisation and cervical sample-taker training**

Please see attached a letter outlining important learning from recent incidents affecting immunisation and cervical sample-taker learning. We hope you will find this helpful to minimise the risk of further incidents. Please share with all staff involved in the immunisation and cervical screening programmes in your practice.

### **VACCINATIONS:**

#### **Pneumococcal vaccination eligibility for those with Coeliac Disease**

We have recently received a few queries through our immunisation clinical advice service (ICARS), asking whether individuals who have Coeliac disease are eligible to receive the Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV23).

Coeliac disease is not in itself a criterion for PPV23 eligibility, but it is the splenic dysfunction that can result from Coeliac Disease that would make an individual eligible. This is outlined on

page 7 of the [Pneumococcal Chapter within The Green Book \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614222/green-book-2020-2021.pdf) in the below table:

Clinical risk group	Examples (decision based on clinical judgement)
Asplenia or dysfunction of the spleen	This also includes conditions that may lead to splenic dysfunction such as homozygous sickle cell disease and coeliac syndrome.

On page 2 within the [Green Book chapter 7](#), it states that only ‘Around 30% of adults with coeliac disease have defective splenic function’ and that ‘hyposplenism in coeliac disease is uncommon in children, and the prevalence correlates with the duration of exposure to gluten’. Therefore, for patients diagnosed with coeliac disease early in life and for those whose condition is well managed - they are unlikely to require PPV23 vaccination. Although as outlined in the above table heading, the decision to vaccinate with PPV23 in individuals with Coeliac disease can be based upon clinical judgement.

Individuals with Coeliac disease which has led to splenic dysfunction would be eligible to receive re-vaccination with PPV23 every five years, as stated on page 4 of the Green Book guidance:

*“Antibody levels are likely to decline rapidly in individuals with asplenia, splenic dysfunction or chronic renal disease (Giebink et al., 1981; Rytel et al., 1986) and, therefore, re-immunisation with PPV23 is recommended every five years in these groups. Testing of antibody levels prior to vaccination is not required.”*

**In summary: only individuals with Coeliac Disease who have known splenic dysfunction, or whose clinicians have a high index of suspicion that they have splenic dysfunction, would be eligible for PPV23 and the 5 yearly boosters due to clinical risk.**

If you have any further questions about this guidance, please do not hesitate to contact us on [england.swicars@nhs.net](mailto:england.swicars@nhs.net).

## COVID-19:

### Reminder: COVID-19 vaccine expiry dates

There have been a number of incidents in the last few weeks reported to ICARS in which expired COVID-19 vaccine has been administered to patients. Please can you remind all staff that the expiry date printed on the individual vials of COVID-19 vaccine is only valid if the vaccine has been stored in a frozen state at ultra-low temperatures ( -90 °C to -60 °C). Prior to delivery to your site, the vaccine has been thawed and the outer carton over labelled with the post thaw expiry date. Thawed vaccine has a much shorter expiry than vaccine stored in a frozen state and the expiry date over labelled on the carton of the vaccine is the expiry date for the vaccine when it is stored in a refrigerator at your site.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- If you have any questions or feedback about this bulletin, please contact the SW Vaccination & Screening Team at [england.swvast@nhs.net](mailto:england.swvast@nhs.net). Back issues are available [here](#).
- For advice about Section 7A or COVID-19 vaccinations, or for support following an immunisation incident, please contact ICARS at [england.swicars@nhs.net](mailto:england.swicars@nhs.net). For more information, please click [here](#).
- For general enquiries, screening related matters or Section 7A public health contracts, please contact [england.swvast@nhs.net](mailto:england.swvast@nhs.net) or [visit our website](#).
- For CQRS payment queries, please contact [england.swcqr@nhs.net](mailto:england.swcqr@nhs.net).
- **Please note:** if there are no items for your information, a Bulletin will not be circulated.