

Dental team vaccinations during winter months

While vaccines will still only be available through nationally funded mass vaccination programmes, this autumn, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has decided to continue offering vaccinations for healthcare workers.

In line with JCVI advice, the NHS is offering COVID-19 vaccinations to anyone at greater risk of serious illness, which includes dental teams.

England dental team members are encouraged to book their COVID-19 vaccine online, through the NHS App, or by calling 119, while in Scotland they can use the winter vaccines NHS page to book their vaccinations. In Wales, all eligible staff members will receive an appointment invitation and in Northern Ireland they can access vaccinations from HSC Trusts vaccination clinics and over 300 community pharmacies across the nation. More information on eligibility and how to obtain a vaccine in Northern Ireland is available on the NI Direct website.

Dental teams are also encouraged to get flu vaccinations this winter.

In England, team members can book their flu vaccination at a pharmacy of their choice and may be eligible to receive this free of charge either through their organisation's policy or as part of the JCVI cohort eligibility guidance. We have repeatedly pressed NHS England for all general dental practitioners and dental teams to have access to free flu vaccination, and for there to be consistent provision of occupational health services.

In Scotland, dental team members can use the winter vaccines NHS page to book their flu vaccinations.

Public Health Wales have advised that independent primary care providers, including dental practices are included in the NHS seasonal influenza vaccination programme. Vaccinations should be offered through occupational health schemes. In Northern Ireland, workers can access flu vaccinations from HSC Trusts vaccination clinics and over 300 community pharmacies.

SBDN CELEBRATES NEBDN'S 80TH ANNIVERSARY

The Society of British Dental Nurses were delighted to attend an 80th anniversary dinner at the Villa Country House Hotel on 19 October 2023, as guests of the National Examining Board of Dental Nurses (NEBDN).

The Society holds education and development at the heart of its core values and recognises the importance of not only working collaboratively but also of knowing the history, to inform the future. Tracy Wallis became President of the Society in 2022 and has had the opportunity on several occasions to meet the Chief Executive Officer of NEBDN, Kate Kerslake. Tracy has a wealth

of both knowledge and experience in dental and public health education and in her role at the University of Portsmouth remains part of the clinical learning environment.

Tracy congratulated the NEBDN and as part of the Society will continue to embrace that relationship.



SBDN President Tracy Wallis at NEBDN's 80th celebration dinner

BSPD ADVISES MEMBERS TO DISCUSS IMMUNISATION WITH PATIENTS

The British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) has issued advice to members to open up conversations about vaccinations as reports of measles cases increase across the UK.

The Society's advice is to highlight the evidence-based risk, explain this to families in the context of NHS guidelines and to signpost parents and carers of unvaccinated children to their GP or health visitor. BSPD believes that as part of 'Making Every Contact Count' (MECC)¹ and our commitment to provide holistic care for our patients, this is the ideal opportunity for dentists to play their role.

Dentists will be asking about patients' vaccination status anyway – as part of the routine medical history. BSPD believes that this is the moment to ask specifically about MMR immunisation and recommends Dental Check by 1 (DCby1), as an ideal time to remind parents and carers to ensure their children's immunisation records are up to date (DCby1 is BSPD's campaign to get children into a dentist's chair before their first birthday).

Measles is an infection that spreads very easily and can cause serious problems in some people. Having the MMR vaccine is the best way to prevent it.

Professor Paula Waterhouse, BSPD President said: 'BSPD supports MECC and it makes sense for our members to take this opportunity to spread the

message about the importance of vaccination. We recommend paediatric dentists and GPs seeing children – and their parents or carers – take this moment to discuss the MMR vaccine, which is free for all on the NHS. We recommend suggesting a parent or carer checks their child's Red Book or contacts their GP practice or health visitor to arrange an appointment. We know that vaccines are our best defence against measles, which spreads very easily, but is preventable.'

References

1. Public Health England. Making Every Contact Count (MECC): Consensus statement. April 2016. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/making-every-contact-count.pdf> (accessed November 2023).

