

Name of Vaccine	Date Given
<b>Strongly Recommended</b>	
Pneumococcal (PCV13)	
Hemophilus Influenza Type B (Hib)	
Meningococcal (MCV4) 1 <sup>st</sup> dose	
Meningococcal (MCV4) 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose	
Pneumococcal (PPSV23)	
<b>Optional</b>	
Meningococcal (Men B) 1 <sup>st</sup> dose	
Meningococcal (Men B) 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose	



Department of  
**General Surgery and Pharmacy**

**Department of Pharmacy**

TTSH Medical Centre, Level B2

**Contact:**

8771 7955 (Duty Hotline)



Scan the QR Code with your smart phone to access the information online or visit <http://bit.ly/TTSHHealth-Library>

Was this information helpful?

Please feel free to email us if you have any feedback regarding what you have just read at [patienteducation@ttsh.com.sg](mailto:patienteducation@ttsh.com.sg)



© Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Singapore 2022. All rights reserved. All information correct as of December 2022. No part of this document may be reproduced, copied, reverse compiled, adapted, distributed, commercially exploited, displayed or stored in a database, retrieval system or transmitted in any form without prior permission of Tan Tock Seng Hospital. All information and material found in this document are for purposes of information only and are not meant to substitute any advice provided by your own physician or other medical professionals.

## Vaccinations for Splenectomy



## What Is Splenectomy?

Splenectomy is a surgical operation done to remove a diseased or damaged spleen. The spleen is located in the uppermost area on the left of the abdomen. A healthy spleen protects our bodies against parasites within the red blood cells (e.g. malaria & babesia) and other infections.

## Why Does My Spleen Have to Be Removed?

Emergency removal of the spleen as a result of:

- Injury to the spleen with uncontrolled bleeding
- Spontaneous rupture/burst of the spleen (very rare)

Elective/planned removal of the spleen as a result of:

- Blood disorders in the patient (e.g. Idiopathic thrombocytopenia purpura (ITP), hemolytic anemia, hereditary spherocytosis)
- Blood clot in the blood vessels of the spleen
- Progression of disease to a certain stage (e.g. Hodgkin's disease)
- Symptom control in a patient with a severely overgrown spleen
- Disease control in a patient with certain forms of leukemia/cancers (e.g hairy cell leukemia)
- An operation to remove a growth or tumour in the spleen

## Will I Get Sick More Easily After My Spleen Is Removed?

You may be at a higher risk of serious infections as compared to most healthy people for the rest of your life, especially in the first three years post-splenectomy. However, your body can still handle most infections because the spleen is only one part of the body's defense system.

## What Can I Do to Decrease the Risk of Infections?

You can decrease the risk of infections by getting necessary vaccinations.

### 1. Pneumococcal Vaccination

This vaccine would reduce your risk of developing serious pneumonia (severe inflammation of the lungs) and other lung infections. You will receive two types of pneumococcal vaccines which are **PCV13** and **PPSV23**. For PCV13, you will only require one dose. For PPSV23, you will require two doses, five years apart.

### 2. Haemophilus Influenza Type B (Hib) Vaccination

This vaccine would reduce your risk of developing infections caused by Hib. Hib commonly affects the lungs (pneumonia), tissues that cover the windpipe (epiglottitis), brain (meningitis), skin (cellulitis) and joints (septic arthritis).

### 3. Meningococcal Vaccinations

These vaccines would reduce your risk of infections caused by meningococcal bacteria, which affects the brain (meningitis) and blood (meningococemia). These vaccines are available as **MCV4 (covers 4 strains/types of infections)** and **Men B** (optional).

For MCV4, you should receive two doses at least eight weeks apart, then a booster dose may be given every five years. For Men B (optional), you should also receive two doses at least two months apart.

You should be reminded that these vaccinations do not guarantee you full protection against infections. Therefore, you should see your doctor immediately if you do not feel well. For elective/planned splenectomy, vaccinations should be given at least two weeks before the surgery.

For emergency splenectomy, the patient should be vaccinated upon discharge or two weeks after the splenectomy, whichever is earlier.

Some vaccines cannot be given on the same day. You may need follow-up appointments to complete the required vaccinations. Your care provider will provide you with more information during the doctor's visit.

Even though vaccinations should be done as soon as possible, it is not recommended during pregnancy or when you are having an infection.

## What Should I Do If I Feel Unwell?

It is important that you go and see a doctor immediately if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Breathlessness
- Abdominal pain
- Skin rash, swelling, redness or infections
- Diarrhoea
- Body aches or weakness

These are signs that you may have an infection. You should inform your doctor that your spleen has been removed. Without your spleen, even a small or minor infection may become very serious. Your doctor needs to examine you and may start you on antibiotics early to help your body fight the infection.

## After the Surgery, Can I Travel Overseas?

If you are visiting areas where malaria is present, you should be aware that you are at a higher risk of severe malaria, and may wish to avoid such areas. If you are visiting these areas, please take precautionary measures to prevent mosquito bites (e.g. apply mosquito repellent, etc.) and see a travel medicine specialist for medications to prevent malaria. Please seek immediate medical help if you develop a fever and avoid travelling to areas where medical help is not readily accessible. You should also take precautionary measures to prevent tick bites and dog bites (e.g. avoid grassy or thick forested areas, avoid stray dogs etc.).

## What Other Measures Do I Have to Take?

You will be given a card with information about your lack of spleen, important clinical details and contact numbers. You should always carry this card with you as it contains information that will be life-saving in an emergency situation.