

CHARITY AMBASSADOR SEEMA JASWAL HELPS LAUNCH MENINGITIS 'NO PLAN B FOR MenB' CAMPAIGN

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MEDIA RELEASE WITH IMAGES

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10th June 2025

The UK's leading meningitis charity, Meningitis Now, is launching a new campaign today (10th June 2025) to tackle cases of MenB among young people.

The charity says there are effective, life-saving vaccines against MenB, but they are not currently offered to teens, who are at increased risk of the disease. Meningitis Now is launching a new campaign called "No Plan B for MenB" setting out the changes it would like to see.

MenB or meningococcal group B are the bacteria that can cause serious illnesses like meningitis and septicaemia. Meningitis can result in life-changing after-effects, including limb loss, hearing loss and acquired brain injury. One in ten people who contract bacterial meningitis will die as a result.

The charity is launching the new campaign today outside the Houses of Parliament, supported by its Ambassador TV presenter Seema Jaswal who experienced meningitis as a teenager, and a host of families who have been affected by the disease.

Charity Ambassador Seema Jaswal said, "I know firsthand how much meningitis can impact the lives of young people. Meningitis Now is contacted by families everyday who are experiencing the devastation caused by the disease. We are launching No Plan B for MenB to protect people in the prime of their lives from meningitis."

Meningitis Now's 'No Plan B for MenB' campaign calls for three things:

- The MenB vaccination to be given to all those at most risk of disease.
- A MenB booster programme to protect adolescents from 2030.
- Availability of the MenB vaccination on the high street at a fair price.

There are thousands of cases of meningitis in the UK every year. MenB is one of the most common causes of bacterial meningitis in the UK, especially amongst under-fives and young people aged 15-24. In the years following the COVID 19 pandemic, cases of MenB disease have been increasing amongst teenagers and young people.

The latest reported statistics for bacterial meningitis in the UK (2023-24) show that 27% of all MenB cases were seen in people aged 15-24 years old.

This age group is at risk of catching MenB but thousands are unaware they are unvaccinated. The UK has a vaccination programme to protect against MenB, which has been given to babies and infants since 2015, but not to teenagers and young people.

The charity's Chief Executive Dr Tom Nutt said, "Vaccines are the best way to prevent against meningitis. There is no plan B for MenB. We must vaccinate those most vulnerable to protect them – now."

"We are calling on the government, NHS and industry to look again at how effective these vaccines are and how to make them more widely available at a fair price."

"While we know that no vaccine will offer complete protection from meningitis, taking steps to make this vaccine more available to those at risk will help save lives and prevent more cases of meningitis."

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Meningitis Now is calling for supporters to sign up to the campaign at their website

www.meningitisnow.org

Kate Speirs, from Hertfordshire, called 111 after a worrying video call with her daughter Sophia, 19, whilst at university. Sophia came dangerously close to losing her life to MenB, one of the most common causes of meningitis in the UK.

“Sophia received every vaccine that was offered to her as a baby and at school. But we were unaware, as so many are, that MenB is a different vaccine that’s not currently offered on the NHS to teenagers.”

Kate added, “Sophia now lives with permanent hearing loss in one ear as a result of MenB and we know that sadly many young people have lost their lives to this disease. I hope that cases similar to Sophia can be prevented thanks to this campaign.”

ENDS

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