

# Care of your BCG vaccination site

## UHD TB Service Patient information

TB Nurse Specialists: **0300 019 4570** Website: **www.uhd.nhs.uk**

### What is a BCG Vaccination?

A BCG is a vaccination is given to help protect against becoming infected with Tuberculosis. It is mainly given in early childhood to children who may have an increased risk of coming in to contact with active tuberculosis. It can also be given to older children and adults, when the risk of being exposed to TB is higher than the general population.

### How the vaccine is given

The vaccine is injected into the outer skin layer makes a small white mark a few millimetres across, which must be left alone. This will disappear within about half an hour.

### After the injection and healing

The BCG will start to cause a reaction at the injection site, usually within 2 weeks, but occasionally longer. A small approximately 3-4 mm red lump, with scaling and blistering of the site, may occur. This will crust over and a scab will then form. It is quite normal for a small amount of fluid/pus to come out of the wound.

With care, the BCG vaccination site should not cause any problems. After about 8 to 12 weeks, although sometimes longer, the scab should come off on its own and leave a small red lesion which will fade slowly over time and eventually leave a small scar. Occasionally healing can take up to 3 to 6 months. If the wound is not healed in excess of 6 months or you have a larger abscess at the site then please contact the TB service on the above number and we will review the vaccination site.

### Aftercare Advice

**It is important to keep the BCG vaccination site clean and dry and let the air get to it as much as possible.** Do not cover it, try to wear loose clothing, but avoid tight and itchy clothes such as woollen jumpers.

- Try to keep the area dry.
- If it is going to get soggy, for instance when swimming, cover the site with a waterproof plaster; take the plaster off as soon as possible, pat the skin dry and let the air get to it again.
- For a quick shower, do not cover the area but be careful not to rub it at all.
- If the wound is open and soggy you can clean it with a piece of gauze soaked in cooled boiled water, pat dry.
- Do not pick, knock or scratch the site and scab. It will make it sore, it will take much longer to heal and could get infected and cause a worse scar.
- No other vaccinations should be given in the same arm as the BCG for a period of 3 months

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