



Changes to the childhood immunisation programme have met with approval from the Meningitis Research Foundation.

National charity welcomes government changes to childhood vaccination programme

National charity Meningitis Research Foundation welcomed news that the government is making changes to the childhood immunisation programme.

The first change is the introduction of a vaccine to protect against pneumococcal meningitis and septicaemia.

There are more than 400 cases of pneumococcal meningitis and septicaemia annually in the under fives in the UK alone. It is estimated that this vaccine will save the lives of about 30 children each year, with at least 100 more spared the devastating after-effects of the infection.

The second change is a booster vaccine against Hib and MenC. Babies in the UK are already routinely immunised against Hib and MenC, but this booster for one year olds will improve protection.

The Meningitis Research Foundation Chief Executive Denise Vaughan said: "The Foundation has been campaigning for

many years for the pneumococcal vaccine to be introduced into the programme. We know it will save many young lives."

New vaccination schedule

Two months – Five-in-one (Hib meningitis, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio), Pneumococcal vaccine.

Three months – Five-in-one (Hib meningitis, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio), MenC vaccine.

Four months – Five-in-one (Hib meningitis, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio), MenC vaccine.

Twelve months – Hib/Men C booster

Thirteen months – MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), pneumococcal vaccine.

Catch up – Pneumococcal vaccine will be offered to all children under two years.

www.meningitis.org

The Variety Club seeks paediatric, neonatal and oncologist nurses

The Variety Club Children's Charity is inviting applications for its seventh annual Nursing Awards Scheme. The grant provides further specialised education and training for qualified paediatric, neonatal and oncologist nurses working with infants and children throughout the UK.

The Nursing Awards Scheme also provides vital support to nurses who would have been prevented from further study due to financial constraints. Applicants must have been in employment for at least two years as a registered nurse working with children.

The scheme provides funding following a successful application to the Variety Club. The award can cover costs towards fees, travel, accommodation and study materials. The deadline for applications is 29 May 2006.

Contact Variety Clubs Nursing Awards
Co-ordinator, email: nursing@varietyclub.org.uk, tel: 020 7428 8100.

BLISS calls for nominations for neonatal awards

The Baby Charter Neonatal Awards organised by BLISS, the premature baby charity, will soon be seeking nominations.

There are six categories which will recognise and reward not only those health professionals caring for sick and premature babies in the neonatal unit or when a baby goes home, but also those involved in research or innovation. To commemorate the charity's long involvement with neonatal care there will also be two lifetime achievement awards – for a neonatal nurse and for a neonatologist.

Parents will be nominating teams for the unit and community awards, while health professionals can nominate colleagues for the research or innovation awards, as well as the lifetime awards. Each winning team will be awarded £1,000 and the closing date for nominations is 31st July.

The awards are sponsored by Abbott, Medela and Pampers®.

Information will be available from April on the BLISS website: www.bliss.org.uk.

Secrets behind a full 12 hours sleep for babies are revealed

On February 6th more than 100 health visitors and midwives attended the Pampers® Sleep Seminar in Central London. It was hosted by a group of international sleep experts who examined the importance of sleep for a baby's development and the value of a routine to help babies to learn how to sleep.

The intention was to help health professionals who work with mothers and their young children gain a better understanding of the crucial role of sleep for babies' development and learn practical information that may be applied in the field.

A variety of topics were covered, including 'Sleep and Cognitive Development', 'Learning How to Sleep' and 'Sleep and Cultural Differences'.

The seminar signaled the opening of the Pampers Sleep Like A Baby experiential tour, which will be visiting nine locations across the UK from February to April. The tour will allow visitors to experience a 12 hour sleep journey through the eyes of a baby, admission is free.

Email: sleep@pampers.com or visit www.pampers.com



The Pampers Sleeper train, designed to take the Sleep Like A Baby experience around the UK, visits Newcastle.

A baby's eye view inside one of the carriages.



Working life gets harder for nurses

Violent attacks against nurses are increasing and their psychological wellbeing is worsening according to a survey published today by the Royal College of Nursing (RCN). Nearly three-thousand nurses from across the UK responded to the 'Working Well – At Breaking Point' survey, which questions nurses about issues such as bullying and stress.

The survey looked at exposure to stressors at work, and found that nurses experienced more stress than the general working population, measured by Health and Safety Executive (HSE) stress standards. This was related to issues such as violent and abusive attacks by patients and relatives, bullying, work demands, control over their work and relationship with colleagues. Low scores on the HSE stressors scales are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and a greater desire to look for another job.

Four in ten nurses report that they have been harassed or assaulted by patients or their relatives in the last 12 months. This figure is higher than was reported in 2000 (34%). More than a quarter (27%) of the

survey's respondents said they had been physically attacked at work; almost half of these said they had been assaulted in the previous year. This figure increases to 79% for nurses working in accident and emergency.

In 2000, 17% said they were bullied or harassed. By 2005, nearly a quarter of respondents had been bullied or harassed at work in the past twelve months with 45% reporting that a manager was the source of the problem. Over two thirds who reported problems to their employer were unhappy with the outcome.

Nurses' levels of psychological wellbeing have also lowered since the survey was conducted in 2000 and is considerably poorer than that of the general population.

Child protection training drive for doctors is launched

A new scheme to give doctors more skills in managing suspected cases of child abuse has been launched by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, the NSPCC and the Advanced Life Support Group.

'Safeguarding Children – Recognition and Response in Child Protection' is the first nationwide course which enables doctors to better recognise and respond to possible child abuse.

Until now, the availability of child protection training for paediatricians varied enormously across the country and was not mandatory. Every paediatrician will have to take a recognised child protection course as part of their training.

Contact Vicky Hardman, tel: 020 7825 7403 or Claire Brunert, tel: 020 7307 8004

Helpline reaches out to working parents

Contact a Family, the leading charity for families with disabled children, is extending its Helpline opening hours in a bid to reach more working parents.

The freephone helpline is now open from 5.30pm to 7.30pm on Monday evenings, in addition to the usual hours of 10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.

Contact a Family helpline: 0808 808 3555, website: www.cafamily.org.uk