

FACT SHEET

VACCINES

When a child is diagnosed with A-T, their immune system often does not work as well as it should. It is therefore important to protect the immune system as much as possible. Our immunologists recommend certain vaccines to boost the immunity of people with AT. These include the flu vaccine and vaccines against various childhood diseases.

Flu and chest problems

It is important to receive the influenzae vaccine to provide protection from flu as this virus often makes people vulnerable to subsequent bacterial infections. The influenzae virus changes each year so this vaccine should be given in the autumn on a yearly basis.

We advise the injectable version. The nasal vaccine is a live vaccine. Although it is likely to be safe in most individuals with AT, it may cause a problem in the minority of people who have a very poor immune system. As live vaccines can cause problems in individuals with a poor immune system, people with A-T should generally avoid them or at least discuss with their immunologist before receiving one. Non-live vaccines are safe.

The “pneumonia” vaccine (Pneumovax II) may be offered by your GP surgery. This is a vaccine against a common chest bug called pneumococcus. However, in children with A-T we advise a different pneumococcal vaccine called Prevenar 13, rather than Pneumovax II.

In adults, Pneumovax II can be given if not previously received over the last 5 years and may give some protection against pneumonia. The response to the pneumonia vaccine is variable in AT and your immunologist may take blood sample before and after the vaccine to see whether you respond to it. In some cases the children's vaccine Prevenar 13 may be offered as this may work better in some individuals.

Chicken pox

Many **individuals** with AT have not experienced chickenpox infection in childhood and are thus at risk of infection as **older children** / adults.

A chickenpox vaccine is available in the UK but not routinely administered. If you haven't had chicken pox, discuss this with your immunologist as the vaccine may be recommended. As this is a live vaccine it may **not be** suitable for **all** patients with AT.

Other vaccines

Other vaccines you may be offered are the meningitis jabs and cervical cancer vaccine. These are both perfectly safe for children or adults with A-T to have as they are not live vaccines.

If you have any queries about these or any other vaccines please do contact us on 01582 760733 or email support@atsociety.org.uk.