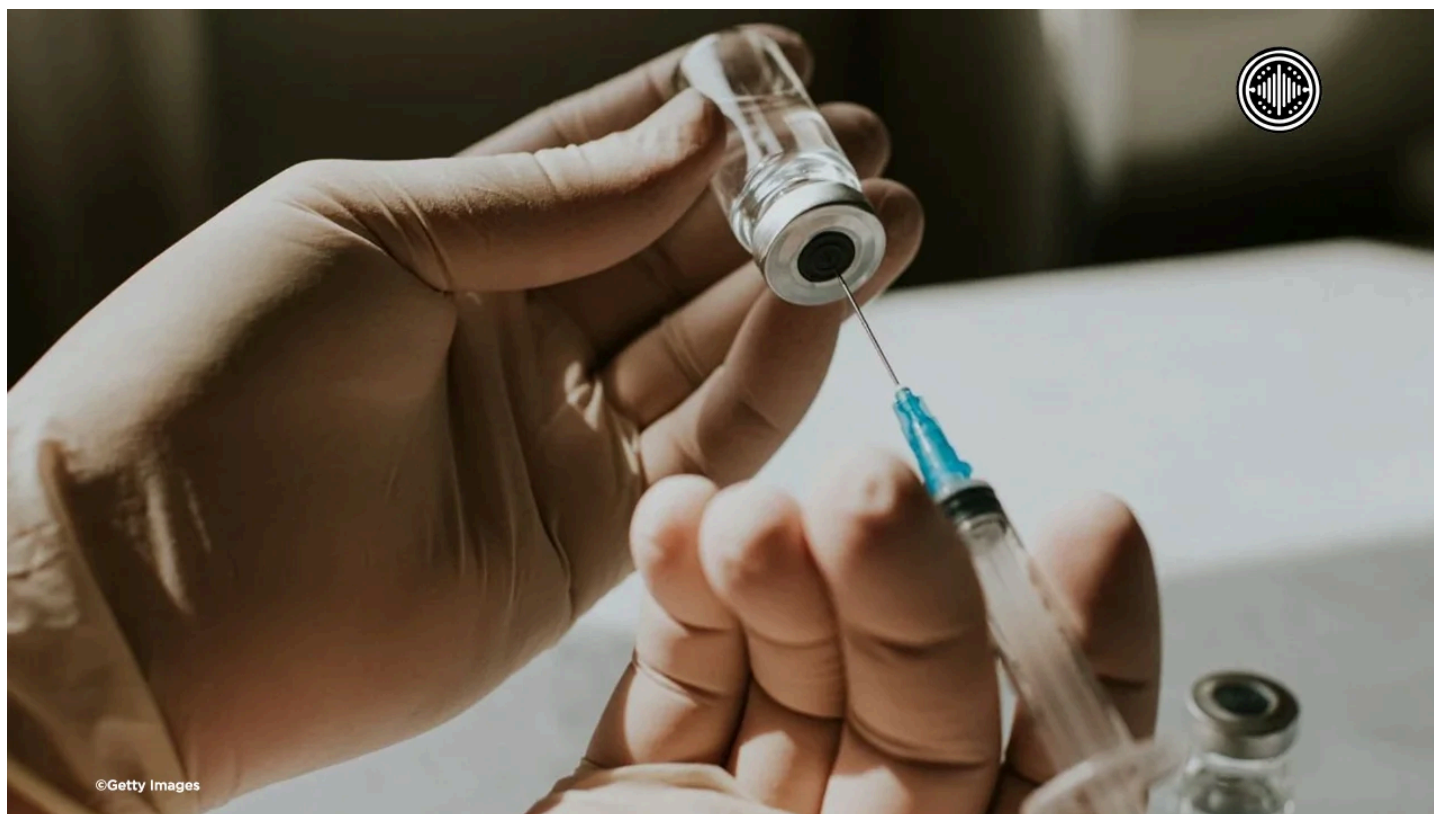


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## England Becomes First Country to Launch Gonorrhoea Vaccine Amid Record Infections

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— Categories: *Breaking News*



England has become the first country in the world to introduce a vaccination programme targeting gonorrhoea, in response to a sharp rise in cases. Beginning today, sexual health clinics across the country are offering the vaccine, with priority given to individuals considered most at risk of infection.

The rollout comes as the number of recorded gonorrhoea cases reached 85,000 in 2023, the highest since surveillance began in 1918. This marks a significant increase compared to figures from 2012, when case numbers were approximately a third of current levels. Health authorities have introduced the vaccine as a strategic response to rising infections and growing concerns over antibiotic-resistant strains of the disease.

The programme makes use of a modified version of the 4CMenB vaccine, originally developed to protect against meningitis B. Research by Imperial College London has shown that the vaccine is between 32.7 per cent and 42 per cent effective in preventing gonorrhoea infections. While it does not provide full immunity, modelling suggests it could prevent around 100,000 infections over the next ten years.

Alongside public health benefits, the scheme is projected to deliver considerable financial savings. Estimates suggest that preventing further infections through vaccination could save the National Health Service (NHS) more than £7.9 million over the coming decade. The vaccine will be offered at no cost to individuals deemed most vulnerable, particularly men who have sex with men who report multiple partners and have been diagnosed with a bacterial sexually transmitted infection within the past year.

Those attending for the gonorrhoea vaccination will also have access to immunisations for other conditions, including mpox (formerly known as monkeypox), human papillomavirus (HPV), and hepatitis A and B. The combined approach is intended to maximise efficiency in sexual health care delivery.

Public Health and Prevention Minister Ashley Dalton described the vaccine rollout as a “major breakthrough” in tackling a disease that has reached record levels. She noted that the initiative would play a crucial role in reversing infection trends and addressing the wider issue of antibiotic resistance. Dalton encouraged all eligible individuals to come forward to receive the vaccine in order to protect themselves and others.

Dr Sema Mandal, a consultant epidemiologist with the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA), also welcomed the programme, stating that it offers vital protection to those most at risk. She urged eligible individuals not to delay seeking vaccination, warning that postponement could lead to avoidable consequences.

The rollout positions England at the forefront of international efforts to combat rising rates of gonorrhoea and marks a significant development in preventative public health strategy.