

Meningococcal Conjugate C Vaccine

Vaccines have saved more lives compared to any other medical intervention. Vaccines help the immune system recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause serious diseases.

Meningococcal C disease is vaccine preventable.

- **Meningococcal C disease** is a very contagious, serious and life-threatening disease caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* type C bacteria.
- It causes meningitis (an infection of the lining that covers the brain) and septicemia (an infection of the blood).
- Finger, toe, arm or leg amputations, permanent hearing loss, permanent brain damage and seizures may occur.
- Most cases occur in children, adolescents and seniors.
- Even with antibiotic treatment, 1 out of 10 people who have meningococcal disease die.

What are the symptoms of meningococcal C disease?

- Symptoms of meningococcal C disease start within days after contact with the bacteria.
- Symptoms progress very rapidly and include fever, severe headache, joint pain, nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light and a stiff neck.
- A tiny reddish-purple or bruise-like rash on the body and decreased alertness occur soon afterwards.
- Septic shock (severe drop in blood pressure) can occur within 24 hours.
- It is important to see a doctor if you or your child have the symptoms listed above.
- Within 24 hours of taking antibiotics, people are no longer infectious to others.

How are meningococcal type C bacteria spread?

- Through coughing and sneezing, close face-to-face contact, in saliva when kissing and by sharing drinks.
- Many people carry these bacteria in their nose and throat but do not become sick.

How can meningococcal C disease be prevented?

- Be immunized. When you / your child are immunized, you help protect others as well.
- Practice good hygiene (e.g. handwashing).
- Cover your mouth when coughing and your nose and mouth when sneezing to prevent direct contact with droplets from the nose or throat.
- Don't share food, drinks, cigarettes, straws, dishes, musical instrument mouthpieces, lip care products, water bottles, mouth guards used for sports, baby bottles, soothers or toys.
- There are other vaccines that prevent meningococcal disease. Meningococcal C vaccine does not protect against other meningococcal bacteria types.

Who can get this vaccine for free?

- Children at 12 months of age as part of the routine childhood immunization program.
- Individuals 2 months of age and older who have been identified as 'close contacts' of persons who have meningococcal C disease.

Who should not get this vaccine?

- Persons who have a serious acute illness, with or without fever, should delay immunization.
- People who have had a serious or life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of meningococcal vaccine, or severe allergies to any of the vaccine components.

What are common reactions to this vaccine?

- **Vaccines are very safe and effective. It is much safer to get this vaccine than to get meningococcal disease.**
- Temporary pain, tenderness, redness and swelling where the needle was given.
- Fever, decreased appetite, drowsiness, crying, irritability, headache, vomiting, diarrhea or skin rash.
- These reactions are mild and generally last 1 to 2 days.
- High fevers and seizures are uncommon.
- Only treat a fever (at least 6 to 8 hours after immunization) **if your child is uncomfortable, refusing fluids and not sleeping.**

Use **Acetaminophen** (all ages; Tylenol®, Tempra®) or **Ibuprofen** (6 months & older; Advil®, Motrin®) to treat fevers and pain. **Never give ASA** (Aspirin®) to children younger than 18 years old because of the serious risk of Reye's syndrome.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in one million people who get the vaccine. **If this happens after you leave the clinic, get medical attention or call 911 right away.**

Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any adverse or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, your doctor, nurse practitioner or 811 as soon as possible.

Talk to a public health nurse:

- If you have questions or concerns about you or your child's reaction to an immunization.
- If you or your child had to go to a doctor, a hospital or to a health centre with a symptom that might be related to immunization.

What does this vaccine contain?

MENJUGATE® Liquid contains *Neisseria meningitidis* group C oligosaccharide (attached to *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* CRM₁₉₇ protein), aluminum hydroxide, histidine, sodium chloride, and water for injection. Latex free. Thimerosal free. Preservative-free.

Neis-Vac-C® contains *Neisseria meningitidis* group C polysaccharide, tetanus toxoid, aluminum hydroxide, sodium chloride. Latex free. Thimerosal free. Preservative-free.

Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents/guardians discuss consent for immunization with their children. Efforts are first made to get parental/guardian consent for immunizations. However, children at least 13 years of age up to and including 17 years of age, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risks of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations in Saskatchewan by providing mature minor informed consent to a healthcare provider.

For more information, contact your local public health office, your physician, nurse practitioner, HealthLine online or by calling 811.

Provincial immunization fact sheets are available at www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize.

References: [Canadian Immunization Guide](#). Product monographs: NeisVac-C® (2021); MENJUGATE® Liquid (2020).