

# Meningococcal Conjugate A, C, Y and W-135 Vaccine

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

Most meningococcal diseases can be prevented with vaccines.

- Meningococcal disease is a **serious and life-threatening illness** caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*.
- These bacteria cause **meningitis**, an infection of the lining around the brain and **blood infection** (septicemia).
- Meningococcal disease can lead to severe complications such as amputations of fingers, toes, arms or legs, permanent hearing loss, brain damage or seizures.
- Most cases occur in children, adolescents, and seniors.
- Even with antibiotic treatment, **1 out of 10 people** who get this disease will die.

How does meningococcal bacteria spread?

- The bacteria spread through **close contact**, such as coughing or sneezing, close face-to-face contact, kissing, or by sharing drinks, food or utensils.
- Some people carry the bacteria in their nose or throat without feeling sick but can still spread it.

What are symptoms of meningococcal disease?

Symptoms usually begin **within a few days** of contact with the bacteria and can worsen very quickly. They may include:

- fever, severe headache, stiff neck, joint pain, nausea or vomiting, and sensitivity to light.
- A reddish-purple, bruise-like rash and reduced alertness may appear soon after. In severe cases, blood pressure can drop dangerously low within **24 hours**.
- **Seek medical care right away** if you or your child has these symptoms. Once antibiotics are started; people are no longer contagious after 24 hours.

How to prevent meningococcal disease?

- Get immunized. Vaccination protects you and helps protect others.
- Wash your hands often.
- Cover your mouth when coughing and your nose and mouth when sneezing.
- Do not share items that touch the mouth, such as food, drinks, cigarettes, straws, water bottles, musical instrument mouthpieces, lip products, mouth guards, baby bottles, soothers or toys.
- This vaccine protects against four meningococcal bacteria serotypes: A, C, Y and W-135. It does not protect against serotypes B or X.

Who can get this vaccine for free?

- Children at **1 year of age** as part of the routine childhood immunization program.
- People **under 22 years old** who were not previously immunized.
- People **6 weeks of age and older** who are close contacts of someone with meningococcal A, C, Y or W-135 disease.
- People 2 months of age and older with certain medical conditions, including:
  - No spleen, a spleen that doesn't work properly or sickle cell disease.
  - Acquired complement deficiency.
  - Congenital immune system disorder (including complement, properdin, factor D deficiency, primary antibody deficiencies).
  - Solid organ transplant candidates or recipients.
  - Islet cell transplant candidates or recipients.
  - Hematopoietic stem cell transplant.
  - Cochlear implant recipients or those awaiting an implant.
  - Cerebrospinal fluid leak or hydrocephaly.
- Children and youth up to 17 years old living with HIV.

## Who should not get meningococcal vaccine?

- You should wait to get the vaccine if you are feeling very sick, with or without a fever.
- You should not get this vaccine if you have ever had a serious or life-threatening reaction to a previous meningococcal vaccine or any ingredient of the vaccine.

## What are common reactions to meningococcal vaccine?

- **Vaccines are very safe and effective. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get meningococcal disease.**
- Temporary pain, redness and swelling where the needle was given.
- Headache, tiredness, diarrhea, irritability, loss of appetite or fever.
- These reactions are usually mild and go away within 1 to 2 days.
- Treat a fever only (at least 6 to 8 hours after immunization) if you or your child are uncomfortable, not drinking fluids or having trouble sleeping.

It is important to stay at 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 is extremely rare (less than 1 in 1 million people) and can be treated. **If these symptoms happen after you leave the clinic, get medical help right away or call 911.**

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

## Who should you report reactions to?

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

## Talk to a public health nurse if:

- You have questions or concerns about a reaction to a vaccine.

- You or your child needed medical care that may be related to a vaccine from a doctor, hospital or health centre.

## What does meningococcal vaccine contain?

**NIMENRIX™** contains *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup A polysaccharide, *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup C polysaccharide, *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup W-135 polysaccharide, *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup Y polysaccharide, sucrose, trometamol, sodium chloride, water for injection. Thimerosal-free, preservative-free and latex-free. Contains no adjuvants.

**MenQuadfi®** contains meningococcal A, C, Y and W-135 polysaccharides, sodium chloride, sodium acetate, water for injection. Thimerosal-free, preservative-free and latex-free. Contains no adjuvants.

**Menveo™** contains meningococcal A, C, Y and W-135 oligosaccharides, diphtheria CRM197 protein, potassium dihydrogen phosphate, sodium chloride, sodium dihydrogen phosphate monohydrate, di-sodium hydrogen phosphate bihydrate, sucrose, water for injection. Thimerosal-free, preservative-free and latex-free. Contains no adjuvants.

## 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 can 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, physician, nurse practitioner, or HealthLine 811.**

## Resources:

- Provincial immunization fact sheets are available at [www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize)
- [Canadian Immunization Guide.](#)