

Meningococcal Vaccine

Conjugate A, C, Y, and W-135

Ontario Ministry of Health Meningitis Prevention Program - Menactra®

What is Meningococcal Meningitis?

A bacterial disease which can cause inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord, resulting in the sudden onset of fever, headache, nausea, stiff neck, and frequently a blotchy rash.

Symptoms can vary, but include a sudden high fever, severe headache, vomiting, stiff neck and a rash. It may also cause sensitivity to light, sleepiness and confusion; in severe cases, coma.

Prompt treatment with appropriate antibiotics is essential to prevent permanent disability (i.e. limb loss, hearing loss or neurological damage) and/or death.

Usually acquired from contact with the secretions of the nose and throat of an infected person. Up to 10% of the adult population carry these bacteria in their nose and throat. It can be spread by kissing, sharing eating utensils, coughing, sneezing, and even by sharing water bottles. Do not share objects that have touched another person's mouth. Wash your hands and cover your cough by coughing in your sleeve or tissue.

Who should receive the Meningococcal vaccine?

The vaccine is given to prevent 4 bacterial strains of meningitis that are vaccine preventable; these strains are A, C, Y, and W-135.

Those at greatest risk for infection include:

- Children under the age of 5 years, adolescents and young adults.
- Close contacts of individuals with meningococcal disease and individuals without a spleen or who are immunocompromised.

The vaccine is also given to:

- High-risk groups in the event of an outbreak to stop further spread of disease.
- Travellers heading to parts of central Africa and South America where Meningitis is endemic.

Who should **NOT** receive this vaccine?

- Vaccination should be delayed in anyone who has a fever, or any infection more serious than a cold.
- Anyone who is allergic to the vaccine, aluminum, latex, or sodium phosphate.
- Anyone who has had a severe reaction to a vaccine should discuss this with his or her doctor before receiving this vaccine.
- Anyone who has a poor immune system due to illness or drug treatment, is pregnant or breastfeeding, or has a bleeding disorder should discuss the need for the vaccine with his or her health care provider before receiving this vaccine.
- Individuals with a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS).

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How do I get this vaccine for my child?

Please complete and sign the attached consent form and return it to your child's school.

Severe reactions are rare. However, you should wait 15 minutes after your injection before leaving. Report any severe reaction to your health care provider or to Community Health Services Department.