

What is Meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by infection with a bacterium (germ) called *Neisseria meningitidis*. This infection can cause meningitis (an infection in the lining of the brain or spinal cord,) or septicemia (infection of the blood and organs) which could result in permanent brain damage, organ failure and even death.

How is Meningococcal disease spread?

Meningococcal disease is spread from an infected person by the respiratory route which includes kissing, coughing, sneezing, sharing items such as water bottles or from handling soiled items such as tissues. It may also be spread when living in close quarters with an infected person.

Why do we recommend vaccination for Meningococcal disease?

Immunization and clean, cover and contain practices are the best methods of prevention. There are three types of Meningococcal vaccine currently available:

- Meningococcal Conjugate-C vaccine (Men C-C) which provides protection against one type of meningococcal disease, type C. This vaccine is routinely offered at 12 months of age.
- Meningococcal Conjugate ACYW135 vaccine (Men-C-ACYW135) which provides protection against 4 types of meningococcal disease A, C, Y, and W-135. This vaccine is routinely offered in grade 4.
- Meningococcal B vaccine (4CMenB) which provides protection against one type of meningococcal disease, type B.

The number of doses you require will depend on the reason you need to receive the vaccine

Who should NOT get the Meningococcal vaccine?

Anyone who has had a severe allergic reaction to any contents of the vaccine or a previous dose of this vaccine should not receive this vaccine.

Is the Meningococcal vaccine safe?

All vaccines recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and the Provincial Department of Health and Community Services, such as this one, are safe and effective.

What are the vaccine's common side effects?

Side effects are generally mild and usually last a day or two. Some side effects may include a sore arm (redness, tender, swollen) at the site of the injection, headache, fatigue or fever. Serious side effects are rare and should be reported to the community/public health nurse.

**For additional information and
services contact the Regional Health
Authority in your community.**