



Don't Wait, Vaccinate!

Invasive Meningococcal Disease

What you should know about invasive meningococcal disease

What is invasive meningococcal disease?

It's a serious infection caused by bacteria. When the bacteria enter the body, they can cause serious infections like meningitis (infection of the brain and spine) and septicemia (infection of the blood).

What happens when you have invasive meningococcal disease?

Symptoms can appear between 2-10 days, but most often between 3-4 days after being infected. Symptoms progress very quickly and can include: stiff neck, bad headache, sudden fever, moodiness, vomiting and a rapidly spreading rash that starts as dark reddish/purplish spots that can appear anywhere on the skin.

How does invasive meningococcal disease spread?

It spreads from someone who has the infection; when they cough, sneeze, kiss others or share items that touch your mouth such as soothers, cups and bottles.

Some people may have the bacteria but not know it because they may not feel sick. They are still able to pass the bacteria to other people who are not immunized.

SYMPTOMS OF INVASIVE MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

- Sudden fever
- Stiff neck
- Bad headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Moodiness
- General feeling of illness
- Eyes that are sensitive to light
- Dark reddish/purplish spots anywhere on the skin

COMPLICATIONS OF INVASIVE MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

- Death in 10% of cases
- Kidney failure
- Permanent brain damage
- Amputation
- Hearing loss
- Visual impairment
- Skin scarring

How do you prevent invasive meningococcal disease?

Immunization is the best way to protect yourself, your children and your community.

Avoid sharing personal items that touch your mouth such as water bottles, food, lipstick, toothbrushes and eating utensils. Wash your hands well and often. Avoid being close to people who have symptoms of the disease.

How is invasive meningococcal disease found and treated?

Invasive meningococcal disease is a medical emergency. It is found based on symptoms and lab test results. Antibiotics are used to treat the disease. Treatment is more effective when started early.

See your health care provider **right away** if you think you or your child has the disease or have been in contact with someone who has the disease. If possible, call your healthcare provider to let them know you are on your way to see them and why.



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What you should know about the meningococcal vaccines

What are the meningococcal vaccines?

There are different kinds of meningococcal vaccines available for use in Canada. These vaccines help protect against certain strains of bacteria that cause the disease. Some protect against more strains than others. The most common ones offered in Canada are Men-C-C and Men-C-ACYW-135. The Men-C-C vaccine protects against one strain of the bacteria. The Men-C-ACYW-135 protects against four strains. Talk to your healthcare provider to learn what options are available for you.

How well do the meningococcal vaccines work?

These vaccines work very well at first but the level of protection lowers over time. Some meningococcal vaccines require an extra dose (or "booster") for the best protection.

What are the benefits of these vaccines?

The meningococcal vaccines are safe, work well and are usually free. Immunization is the best way to protect against invasive meningococcal disease.

Who should get the meningococcal vaccines?

In Canada, it is recommended that children 1 to 5 years of age get at least one dose of the Men-C-C vaccine. Some provinces and territories give the vaccine before age one, in this case an additional dose is needed after the child turns 1 year of age.

A booster dose is recommended around 12 years of age for the best protection. This dose could be Men-C-C or Men-C-ACYW-135 depending on your province or territory.

If you think your child or teenager missed any of their meningococcal vaccine doses, please contact your healthcare provider.

Additional doses or other types of meningococcal vaccines may be recommended or offered, depending on your health and risk of getting the disease. Age, certain health conditions, and travel to areas where meningococcal disease is present, are things that can make it more likely to become sick with the disease.

Where can I get the vaccines?

Call your health care provider or local Public Health Unit.

What are the possible side effects of the meningococcal vaccines?

In some cases, your child may have some symptoms which are usually mild and don't last long. Your child's arm may be a bit red, sore or swollen where the injection was given. Some people may have a mild fever, headache, fatigue, or feel moody.

Talk to your health care provider about how to help relieve any symptoms after vaccination.

Where can I get more information?

Canada.ca/vaccines

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