

Meningococcal Disease and Vaccine Fact Sheet

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis* group. The bacteria that cause meningococcal disease are carried in the nose and throat. The disease can spread when nose or throat secretions of an infected person come into contact with the nose or mouth of another person. This can occur by kissing or sharing items like eating utensils, cigarettes or cans of pop.

The bacteria can cause meningitis, which is a serious infection around the brain and spinal cord. It can also cause a very serious blood system infection and internal organ infection that can progress very rapidly. Although there are antibiotics that can be used to treat the infection, they may not prevent permanent damage or even death.

How common is meningococcal disease?

There are different types of meningococcal bacteria. The group C bacteria traditionally caused most of the outbreaks in Canada. **Pre-teens, teenagers and young adults are at high risk.** Since 2000, there has been an increase in the incidence of disease caused by groups Y and N 135.

Is there a vaccine against meningococcal infections?

There are a number of vaccines that provide protection against Meningococcal disease. Meningococcal conjugate ACYW135 is approved for persons 2 – 55 years. A vaccine for a particular strain will not protect against other strains. Since 2005 routine immunization against meningococcal (sero group C) disease was recommended and publicly funded for children over 1 year of age. Students in grade 7 and 15 – 19 year olds were offered the vaccine as a “catch up” program.

Studies have shown that a routine dose of meningococcal vaccine is now necessary for adolescents.

Who should not have the meningococcal conjugate Men C-ACYW135 vaccine?

The following people should not have this vaccine:

- Anyone who has had a past allergic reaction to vaccine or any of its components, diphtheria toxoid, and latex.
- Pregnant or breast-feeding women should consult with their Health Care Provider.
- Anyone who has a bleeding disorder.
- Anyone who has received the polysaccharide meningococcal vaccine (Menomune™) within the past 6 months or meningococcal conjugate vaccine within the last month
- Anyone who has a fever or anything more serious than a minor cold.
- History of Guillain-Barré Syndrome

Is the vaccine safe?

Most people who get the vaccine have no side effects. The most common side effects are redness, pain, and swelling at the injection site. More severe reactions such as high fever, hives, convulsions or trouble breathing are extremely rare.

Your record of meningococcal vaccine protection:

The nurse will provide you with a record of immunization. It is very important to keep this record, as you may need proof of this at a later time. Please notify the Health Unit any time you receive a vaccine to ensure that your record is up to date.

For more information, please contact:

The Corporation of the Leeds, Grenville
and Lanark District Health Unit
613-345-5685 (Brockville office)
613-283-2740 (Smiths Falls office)
1-800-660-5853

Visit www.healthunit.org

DCS-10/09-VPD-083

An Accredited Health Unit Since 1990

<input type="checkbox"/> MAIN OFFICE: 458 Laurier Blvd. Brockville, ON K6V 7A3 (613) 345-5685 FAX: (613) 345-2879	<input type="checkbox"/> SMITHS FALLS OFFICE 52 Abbott St. N. Unit #2 Smiths Falls, ON K7A 1W3 (613) 283-2740 FAX: (613) 283-1679	<input type="checkbox"/> KEMPTVILLE OFFICE Box 343 Concession Rd. Kemptonville, ON K0G 1J0 (613) 258-5941 FAX: (613) 258-1407	<input type="checkbox"/> ALMONTE OFFICE 79 Spring St. Unit #3 Almonte, ON K0A 1A0 (613) 256-1203 FAX: (613) 256-1217	<input type="checkbox"/> GANANOQUE OFFICE 375 William St. S. Suite 200 Gananoque, ON K7G 1T2 (613) 382-4231 FAX: (613) 382-7599
---	---	---	--	---