



Meningococcal vaccines

About meningococcal disease

Meningococcal disease is a bacterial illness that can cause meningitis, an infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord, as well as bloodstream infections. Meningococcal vaccines can help protect against this serious disease.

Meningococcal disease rates have declined in the U.S. since the 1990s. However, infections can cause lasting complications and be deadly within hours. Even with treatment, meningococcal disease kills 10 to 15 infected people out of 100. Of those who survive infection, 10 to 20 out of every 100 will suffer permanent disabilities.

Symptoms of meningococcal disease include fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, confusion, tiredness, severe aches, and rapid breathing. In babies, you may notice inactivity, irritability, poor feeding, vomiting, or a bulging soft spot.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but certain people are at increased risk including:

- infants younger than 1 year old
- teens and young adults 16-23 years old
(*especially college students in shared housing*)
- adults 65 years and older
- people with compromised immune systems
- communities with an active disease outbreak
- microbiologists who work with the bacteria

Meningococcal vaccines are highly effective (**85-95%**) in preventing meningococcal disease.

Important details

There are 3 types of meningococcal vaccines:

Meningococcal ACWY vaccine (MCV4 or **MenACWY**) can help protect against meningococcal disease caused by serogroups A, C, W, and Y. MenACWY is a 2-dose vaccine series, with the first dose recommended between ages 11-12, and the second at age 16.

Meningococcal B vaccine (**MenB**) can help protect against serogroup B disease. MenB is a 2-dose vaccine series, recommended between ages 16-18, at least 6 months apart.

Meningococcal **ABCWY** vaccines are available for those getting both MenACWY and MenB vaccines at the same visit. MenABCWY is a 2-dose vaccine series, for those 10-25 years of age. If a booster MenB vaccine is needed, the same brand must be used. Note the MenB component in the pentavalent vaccine used if a MenB booster is indicated.



What to expect after vaccination

It's normal to experience immune response after vaccination—this is how you know the vaccine is working. Side effects are usually mild and resolve on their own within a few days. Some normal immune responses after the meningococcal vaccine include:

- pain, redness, or swelling at the injection site
- tiredness
- headache
- fever or chills
- nausea or diarrhea

People sometimes faint after medical procedures, including vaccination. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy, have vision changes, or ringing in the ears. As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

Tell the vaccination provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- has had an allergic reaction after a previous dose of any vaccine that protects against meningococcal disease
- has any severe, life-threatening allergies

There is limited information on the risks of this vaccine for pregnant or breastfeeding people, but no safety concerns have been identified. A pregnant or breastfeeding person should be vaccinated if indicated.

People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting a meningococcal vaccine.

Meningococcal vaccination statistics

More than 90%

decrease in meningococcal disease cases among adolescents since MenACWY was recommended in 2005

About 10%

of the population are asymptomatic carriers of the bacteria that causes meningococcal disease

Serogroups B & C

cause most meningococcal disease cases in the U.S.

For more vaccine information, go to immunize.utah.gov or scan the QR code!

