

Meningococcal (ACYW-135) Vaccine

FACT SHEET

What is meningococcal disease?

- Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria that can cause serious infections of the lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) or infection of the blood (septicaemia).
- Some people will carry the bacteria for life without becoming sick themselves but they can still pass the virus on to others.
- Approximately 1 in 10 people who develop meningitis will die and 11-19% of survivors will have some form of permanent disability, such as hearing loss, brain damage or limb loss.

How do you catch meningococcal disease?

- Meningococcal disease is easily spread. It is spread by coughing, sneezing and through saliva (such as kissing, sharing food or drink, or by children who share toys that are put into their mouths).

How do you prevent meningococcal disease?

- Don't share anything that's been in your mouth.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Get the meningococcal shot!

Meningococcal Shot

- The meningococcal shot is given in the arm. One shot provides long-term protection against 4 types of meningococcal bacteria (A, C, Y, W-135).

You should not get the meningococcal shot if you:

- Have had a previous reaction to a diphtheria containing vaccine.
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Have a latex allergy (Latex-free vaccine is available if allergy is identified).

What to expect after the shot?

- Some individuals may get pain, swelling, itchiness and/or redness where the shot was given. It is common to have a fever, nausea, dizziness, headache or feel tired after a shot.
- More serious side effects are rare and should be reported to your health care provider right away. These symptoms may include: trouble breathing, swelling of the face or mouth, a fever higher than 39°C, hives or rash.

Note: Most colleges and universities recommend that students be vaccinated against meningitis before attending.