

# Meningococcal Conjugate A, C, Y, W-135 (MenC-ACYW) Vaccine

## Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.

### What is the MenC-ACYW vaccine?

The MenC-ACYW vaccine protects against 4 types of *Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria that cause meningococcal disease. These are types A, C, Y, and W-135 meningococcal disease.

### What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is an infection caused by a bacteria. It can lead to a serious infection of the fluid and lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) or blood.

- One out of 5 people with meningococcal disease have a serious infection that causes deafness, seizures, brain damage, or loss of an arm or leg.
- One out of 10 people with meningococcal disease can die.

### Who is most at risk?

You are most at risk of infection if you:

- are age 4 years or younger, or ages 15 years to 19 years, or age 60 years and older
- have certain health problems
- live in a crowded home
- travel to areas where there is a high risk of meningococcal disease
- do certain work (such as some lab workers)

### How does it spread?

Meningococcal disease spreads through saliva (spit) through kissing or sharing food, toys, or water bottles with someone who has the disease.

Some people do not have symptoms, but can still spread the disease.

### Who should get the MenC-ACYW vaccine?

Grade 9 students can get the MenC-ACYW vaccine as part of the school immunization program. Students who missed getting the MenC-ACYW vaccine in Grade 9 can get it for free until the end of Grade 12.

If your child got the MenC-ACYW vaccine when they were age 12 years or older, they do not need another dose in Grade 9. You should also get this vaccine if you are at risk for meningococcal disease because of:

- certain health problems, such as having your spleen removed, having a spleen that does not work well, or having human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- the type of work you do, such as some lab workers
- close contact with someone with meningococcal disease

Talk to a public health nurse to find out if you can get the MenC-ACYW vaccine for free.

You may also benefit from the vaccine if you travel to an area that has a high risk of meningococcal disease. If you are getting the vaccine because of travel, it is not free.

If you cannot get the vaccine for free, check with your health insurance provider to see if your plan covers the cost.

### How many doses do I need?

You only need 1 dose of MenC-ACYW unless you have a high risk for disease. If your risk is high, you may need extra doses.

Ask your healthcare provider how many doses you need.

### Are there other vaccines that protect against meningococcal disease?

**MenconC** vaccine protects against type C meningococcal disease. As part of the routine immunization schedule, children get this vaccine starting at age 4 months. If your child got MenconC vaccine as a baby, they still need MenC-ACYW vaccine in Grade 9. This will boost their protection against type C meningococcal disease and protect them from types A, Y, and W-135.

**Men-B** vaccine protects against type B meningococcal disease. You may need Men-B vaccine along with the MenC-ACYW if you have certain types of health problems (such as having your spleen removed, having a spleen that does not work well, or HIV).

### How well does the vaccine work?

The protection for types A, C, Y, and W-135 meningococcal disease with the MenC-ACYW vaccine is around 80% to 85%. Protection may weaken over time.

## **Where can I get the MenC-ACYW vaccine?**

Grade 9 students can get the vaccine in school. Parents and guardians will get an information package that includes a consent form. If you want your child to get the vaccine in school, you must complete and sign the consent form and return it according to the instructions provided.

If you need the vaccine because of your work (such as working in a lab), talk to your workplace health and safety department.

If you can get this vaccine for free, contact your local public health or community health centre.

If you want the vaccine and need to pay for it, contact a travel health clinic or talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

## **Are there side effects from the MenC-ACYW vaccine?**

There can be side effects from the MenC-ACYW vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness, swelling, bruising, a hard spot, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- crying, feeling tired or unwell, or getting upset easily
- a headache
- a fever or chills
- body aches or sore joints
- not feeling hungry or not wanting to eat (poor appetite)
- feeling sick to your stomach (nausea), vomiting (throwing up), or loose stool (diarrhea)
- a rash

At least 1 out of 100 people who got this vaccine reported 1 or more of these side effects. In some cases, it is unknown if the vaccine caused these side effects.

It is important to stay for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect after a vaccine. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

## **How can I manage side effects?**

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with a fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

## **Who should not get the MenC-ACYW vaccine?**

You may not be able to get this vaccine if:

- You have an allergy to any part of the vaccine.
- You had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it.

If you have allergies or have had a side effect from this vaccine, check with your doctor or a public health nurse before you get the vaccine.

Although you can get the vaccine if you have a mild illness such as a cold or fever, you should stay home until you are feeling better to prevent spreading your illness to others.

## **I have a fear of needles. How can I prepare for my immunization?**

Many adults and children are afraid of needles. You can do many things before, during, and after immunization to be more comfortable.



Scan the QR code, visit [ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort](https://ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort), or call Health Link at 811 for information.

## **For more information about immunization**



Call Health Link at **811**



Scan the QR code or go to [ahs.ca/immunize](https://ahs.ca/immunize)