

# Meningococcal B (Men-B) Vaccine

**Immunization protects you from disease. 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 this disease.**

## **What is the Men-B vaccine?**

The Men-B vaccine protects against meningococcal disease caused by *Neisseria meningitidis type B* bacteria.

## **Who should have the Men-B vaccine?**

You should get this vaccine if you are at risk for meningococcal B disease because of:

- certain health problems
- the type of work you do (such as some lab workers)
- close contact with someone with meningococcal B disease

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

Other people may also benefit from this vaccine, such as if you travel to an area that has a high risk of meningococcal B disease, but 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?**

The number of doses you need depends on your age and why you are having the vaccine.

Ask your health care provider how many doses you need.

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

**MenconC** is a vaccine that babies get to protect them against type C meningococcal disease.

**MenC-ACYW** is a vaccine that protects against types A, C, Y, and W-135 meningococcal disease. Grade 9 students get it to boost protection for type C and to add protection for types A, Y, and W-135 meningococcal disease. You may also get this vaccine if you travel to an area that has a high risk of meningococcal disease or you have other health problems.

Even if you have had a meningococcal vaccine in the past, you may still need Men-B to protect you from type B meningococcal disease.

## **How well does the vaccine work?**

After the recommended number of doses, between 67% and 100% of people are protected. But protection may weaken over time.

## **Where can I get Men-B vaccine?**

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

If you can get this vaccine for free, contact the public health office in your area.

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 Men-B vaccine?

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

- redness, swelling, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- crying, feeling tired, or getting upset easily
- headache
- fever
- body aches
- not feeling hungry or not wanting to eat (poor appetite)
- feeling sick to your stomach (nausea), vomiting, or loose stool (diarrhea)
- rash or hives (hives are more common in children under age 2 years)

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. 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 fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dosage to take. Follow the directions on the package.

- Children under the age of 18 years should **not** take aspirin because it can cause serious health problems.
- 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 have the Men-B vaccine?

You may not be able to have the vaccine if you:

- have an allergy to parts of the vaccine
- had a severe or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it

Check with your doctor or a public health nurse before you get the vaccine.

You can still have the vaccine if you have a mild illness such as a cold or fever. Always tell your healthcare provider if you have allergies or if you have had a side effect from a vaccine in the past.

## For More Information



Call Health Link at **811**



Go to **ImmunizeAlberta.ca**



Go to **MyHealth.Alberta.ca**

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# Facts about 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 that cover the brain and spinal cord (called meningitis) or blood.

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

## Who is most at risk?

You are most at risk for a serious infection if you:

- are age 4 years or younger, ages 15 years to 19 years, or age 60 years and older
- have health problems

- have an infection in your lungs or airways (like influenza)
- live in a crowded home
- smoke or have contact with second-hand smoke
- 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 during kissing or sharing food, toys, or items such as water bottles with someone who has the disease.

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