

Meningococcal Conjugate Quadrivalent (Men-C-ACYW) Vaccine

Public Health – Fact Sheet

Immunization is one of the most important accomplishments in public health. Immunizations help in eliminating and controlling the spread of infections and diseases. Vaccines help your immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause disease.

What is Meningococcal Disease?

Meningococcal bacteria can cause infection of the brain (meningitis), the blood (sepsis) or both. The most common strains that cause disease are A, B, C, Y and W.

The bacteria spreads from person-to-person. This can be through coughing, sneezing, kissing or sharing food or other things with the person with meningococcal disease.

Symptoms of the disease can develop within two to 10 days of infection. Signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease may include a high fever, rash, intense headache and a stiff neck.

Meningococcal disease can cause serious infection and death, even with prompt treatment.

Approximately 10 per cent of people who get the infection die. Ten to 20 per cent of survivors can suffer from permanent brain damage, hearing loss or loss of their arms or legs.

Prevention of the disease through immunization is recommended.

What is the Men-C-ACYW vaccine?

The meningococcal conjugate quadrivalent (Men-C-ACYW) vaccine is approved by Health Canada. It protects against meningococcal disease that is caused by the strains A, C, Y and W. This vaccine is given by needle.

Why should I get the Men-C-ACYW vaccine?

The vaccine prepares your immune system to fight against the meningococcal bacteria. It is very effective at preventing meningococcal disease and its serious complications. It is important that you or your child(ren) receive all doses based on Manitoba's Recommended Routine Immunization Schedule.

What are the possible side effects of the Men-C-ACYW vaccine?

Health Canada approves vaccines based on a review of vaccine effectiveness and safety. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get meningococcal disease.

Common reactions to the vaccine include pain, soreness, redness or swelling where the vaccine was given. Other symptoms are fever, headache and a general feeling of being unwell. These mild reactions typically last one or two days. Acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) can be given for fever or soreness.

Acetylsalicylic Acid -ASA (e.g. Aspirin) should NEVER be given to children because it can cause a severe liver and brain disease called Reye's Syndrome.

A severe allergic reaction is a serious but rare side-effect of getting the vaccine. Symptoms could include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat and face. It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine so you can be monitored. If symptoms occur after leaving the clinic, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department for immediate attention.

Report any serious or unexpected side effects to a health-care provider.

Who is eligible to get the Men-C-ACYW vaccine?

Under 10 Years of Age

- Children born on or after January 1, 2020 can receive one dose of the Men-C-ACYW vaccine if they are at least 12 months old but less than 10 years old. This is regardless of previous immunization with a Men-C-C vaccine. If they have received a Men-C-C vaccine before, they can receive a dose of Men-C-ACYW at least four weeks from their last dose of Men-C-C vaccine.

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- Individuals born between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2019 can receive a dose of Men-C-ACYW if:
 - They have never received a dose of Men-C-C vaccine as part of the 12-month program AND
 - They are under 10 years old.

10 Years of Age and Older

One dose is also routinely offered to all children in grade six through Manitoba's School Immunization Program.

- Individuals born on or after January 1, 2008 can receive a dose of Men-C-ACYW if they are at least 10 years old. This is regardless of previous Men-C-C or Men-C-ACYW immunizations.
- Individuals born between 1995 and 2007 can receive a dose if they have not yet received a dose of the Men-C-C vaccine.

If your child missed receiving the vaccine during the school program, it can be obtained from another immunization provider.

Some people have medical conditions that may put them at greater risk for meningococcal disease. These people can also receive the Men-C-ACYW vaccine free-of-charge. They may need more than one dose for maximum protection.

These medical conditions include:

- those with no spleen or a spleen that is not working properly
- complement, properdin, factor D or primary antibody deficiency
- acquired complement deficiencies
- certain genetic risk factors (e.g., polymorphisms in the genes for mannose-binding lectin and tumor necrosis factor)
- HIV infection
- hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients
- CAR-T cell therapy recipients
- solid organ transplantation
- patients currently under the care of a hematologist or oncologist from Cancer Care Manitoba

Speak with your health-care provider to see if you are eligible to receive the Men-C-ACYW vaccine free-of-charge as part of the recommended immunization schedule. Your provider would also advise on the number of doses required to provide the required protection against this disease.

For the most up-to-date vaccine eligibility, please visit www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/vaccineeligibility.html

Who should not get the Men-C-ACYW vaccine?

Talk to your health-care provider if you or your child(ren):

- Have had a severe allergic reaction after receiving a previous dose of this vaccine or,
- Is/are allergic to any contents of the vaccine.

Anyone with high fever should postpone immunization until recovered. The vaccine can still be given if the illness is mild, like a cold.

Your record of protection

All immunizations are recorded in a person's immunization record in Manitoba's Immunization Registry.

This registry enables:

- your health-care provider to find out which immunizations you or your child(ren) have received
- the production of immunization records or notification to you about overdue vaccines
- public health officials to monitor how well vaccines work in preventing disease

The Personal Health Information Act protects your information and/or that of your child(ren). You can have your personal health information and/or that of your child(ren) hidden from view from health-care providers. For more information, please refer to: www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/surveillance/phims.html

For information on how to obtain a copy of your immunization record, visit: www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/records.html

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For the most current version of this or other vaccine fact sheets and resources visit: www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/vaccines.html

For more information on meningococcal disease or the Men-C-ACYW vaccine:

- Talk to your health care provider;
- Call Health Links–Info Santé in Winnipeg at 204-788-8200; toll-free elsewhere in Manitoba 1-888-315-9257; or
- Visit Manitoba’s Immunization Program website at: www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/index.html