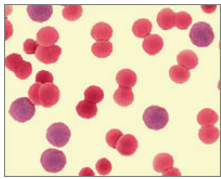


Meningococcal C Disease and Vaccine Information Sheet

What is Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD)?

Meningococcal disease is an illness that can cause meningitis (inflammation of the tissue around the brain and spinal cord) or meningococemia (infection of the blood).



Meningococcal disease is caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria. About 10 to 30 percent of people carry this germ in their throat or nose without getting sick. On rare occasions, the germ overcomes the body's natural defences, and makes the person very sick. The person may develop bacterial meningitis or meningococemia.

There are several strains of *Neisseria meningitidis*. The strain known as meningococcal C causes 30 percent of the meningococcal cases in Canada. In Ontario,



many of the cases of Meningococcal C disease are in adolescents and young adults. The meningococcal C strain

has caused almost all of the local meningococcal outbreaks in schools and communities.

This strain can cause severe long-term health complications or death. People infected with this strain may experience amputations, hearing loss and kidney problems.

What are the symptoms of Meningococcal C disease?

There may be sudden onset of fever, severe headache, a stiff neck, nausea, vomiting and sometimes a rash. Serious illness can develop quickly. About 5-15 percent of people who become ill may die.

How does the disease spread?

The bacteria that cause meningococcal C disease are found in an infected person's saliva, nose and throat secretions and droplets expelled into the air when they cough or sneeze.



The bacteria can spread from person to person through kissing or using items that have been in contact with an infected person's mouth, such as:

- cups, water bottles, straws
- cigarettes
- food and utensils
- musical instruments
- toothbrushes
- lipstick.

An infected person can spread these bacteria up to 7 days before becoming ill with meningococcal disease.

How effective is the Meningococcal C vaccine?

The Meningococcal C vaccine is effective in 92 to 97 percent of those who receive it, and the protection has been shown to last for at least 5 years, and possibly longer.

Who should receive the vaccine?

Meningococcal C vaccine is recommended for the routine immunization of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. It is also important if:

- You do not have a functional spleen (e.g. Sickle cell disease)
- You have a weakened immune system
- You are a student living in residence or a dormitory
- You are a household or close contact of a person diagnosed with meningococcal disease.

Record your immunization on your Yellow Immunization Card and keep it in a safe place.



Who should NOT get the vaccine?

You should not receive this vaccine if:

- You are sick with a fever or infection worse than a cold. (Wait until you feel better)
- You have ever had a severe reaction to a previous dose of vaccine
- You have a severe allergy to aluminum or latex
- You have received Menomune within the past 6 months. (Wait at least 6 months after receiving Menomune before getting the meningococcal C vaccine)
- You are pregnant or breastfeeding. (Discuss you need for immunization with your doctor.)

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

The most commonly reported side effects of the vaccine are redness, pain and swelling at the injection site that may last about a day. Apply ice to the site and/or take acetaminophen to help minimize pain, swelling and/or fever.

Some people may get a low-grade fever, headache or nausea. If you experience anything more severe than these symptoms, please notify your doctor or the public health unit.

For further information, please call
Health Connection
1-800-361-5653
www.york.ca