

Meningococcal Disease and the Vaccine

What is Meningococcal Disease?

- It is a disease caused by a bacteria that many people carry in their throat or nose without feeling sick.
- It is spread through close, direct contact. Examples are kissing, coughing or sharing things like food, drinks, and musical instruments.
- People become sick when the bacteria gets into the blood and other body fluids.
- This can lead to brain swelling, brain damage and sometimes death in just a few hours.

What is in the vaccine ?

What is in the Meningococcal Vaccine?	Where else can these ingredients be found?
Parts of meningococcal bacteria	Meningococcal bacteria
Diphtheria toxoid	Other childhood vaccines
Sodium chloride	Human body, salt
Sodium phosphate	Laxatives

What is the benefit of getting this vaccine?

- The grade 7 vaccine protects against **four** types of the bacteria that cause Meningococcal Disease.

Is this vaccine safe?

- Yes!
- Meningococcal C-ACWY (Nimenrix®) has been in use in Ottawa Public Health immunization clinics since 2007.
- In 2016, only 2 serious reactions to Meningococcal C-ACWY occurred in all of Ontario out of ~ 183,000 doses given¹.
- You cannot get meningococcal disease from the vaccine

What are the side effects from the vaccine?

Most Common	Less Common	Very Rare and Serious
Redness, pain and/or swelling at the site, especially during the first 24 hours	Muscle aches, headache and/or slight fever	Serious allergic reaction causing; trouble breathing, swelling of the face or mouth, hives
Treatment: Apply ice to the area where you got the vaccine and/or take acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®)		Clinic nurses are trained to treat severe reactions

How can I protect myself from Meningococcal Disease?

- Get the vaccine.
- A dose of Meningococcal C-ACWY is recommended for all teens on or after 12 years of age even if the child has already received a previous dose of Meningococcal C-ACWY vaccine (Nimenrix®).
- Do not share food, drinks, or utensils.
- Do not share lipstick or toothbrushes.
- Do not share cigarettes.

Compare the risks – the disease or the vaccine?

Disease Risk	Vaccine Risk
Swelling of the brain (meningitis) causing hearing loss, stroke or seizures	Sore arm: 6 in 10 people Headache or feeling tired : 6 in 10 people
Blood infection causing shock and organ failure Other infections of the lungs, joints, bones, heart and skin Death - 1 in 10 severe cases	Serious reactions are very rare

I already had a meningococcal vaccine

- You may have already received a meningococcal vaccine (e.g. Men. C or Menjugate®) for infants that protects against **one** type of the bacteria.
- MenC-ACWY vaccine protects 80% to 85% of teens against disease caused by four types of bacteria.
- If you are unsure whether you are properly protected against meningococcal disease call Ottawa Public Health 613-580-6744 to speak to a nurse.

How can I prepare for the vaccine?

- Talk to your parent or guardian about the vaccine.
- Learn ways to deal with your worry about the vaccination (focus on breathing, look away from needle, count to ten, etc.).
- Eat breakfast and have an extra juice or small snack to avoid fainting (common with growing teens)

You must have received one dose of this vaccine to attend school. If you choose not to be immunized, your parent or guardian must contact Ottawa Public Health.

For more information please visit:

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunizati on/docs/meningococcal_conjugate_vaccine.pdf

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