

# Meningococcal Vaccine

## (Men-C-ACYW-135)

**Protects against invasive meningococcal disease caused by serogroups A, C, Y, and W-135.**

### What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is an infection caused by the bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis*. There are five common strains that cause serious illness: A, B, C, Y and W-135. These bacteria can cause meningitis, an infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord; and/or sepsis, an infection of the blood which often leads to organ damage.

The bacteria are spread easily through droplets in the air from coughing or sneezing, or through direct contact with an infected person. This includes kissing or sharing items such as food, cutlery, drinks, lip chap or cigarettes/vapes.

Approximately 10 percent of healthy individuals carry the bacteria in their nose or throat without being sick but they are still able spread it to others.

Complications of meningococcal disease can include long term hearing loss, mental impairments and limb amputations. Meningococcal disease kills one out of every 100 people infected.

### Why get vaccinated?

Immunization is the best way to protect you and your family against serious diseases. This vaccine is most effective when given before exposure to the disease.

This vaccine protects against four of the most common and severe strains of meningococcal disease - A, C, Y, and W-135. It is 80-85 percent effective.

If your child received Meningococcal Conjugate C (Men-C-C) vaccine as an infant, they should still receive the Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine as it offers protection against additional strains.

### Who is eligible to be vaccinated?

The vaccine is routinely offered to Grade 7 students with eligibility remaining until the end of grade 12. This vaccine is given as a single dose.

It is also provided free to children and adults at high risk of meningococcal disease, such as those with certain medical conditions or those who have been in close contact with a case. For more information on eligibility, see Table 3 of the [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule for Ontario](#).

This vaccine is recommended, but not provided free, for those with occupational risks, those living or travelling in a high-risk area for meningococcal disease and for anyone wishing to be protected against meningococcal A, C, Y and W-135 strains.

It is important to note that effectiveness does decrease over time. Booster doses may be recommended every 5 years for those at continued risk.

### Who should not get the vaccine?

- Anyone with a severe allergic reaction to any part of the vaccine or its container.
- Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction to this vaccine in the past.
- Anyone with a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold.
- Anyone who has been vaccinated within the past four weeks with another Men-C-C vaccine.

If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) within six weeks of a previous vaccine, please speak to a healthcare provider about getting this vaccine.

## What to expect after vaccination?

Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine is safe and well tolerated.

Side effects, if they occur, are usually mild and go away in a few days. Common side effects include redness, swelling and/or pain at the injection site.

Headache, fever, tiredness, dizziness, nausea and muscle aches may also occur, but are less common.

Severe allergic reactions (i.e. anaphylaxis), although rare, are a risk with the administration of any vaccine. It is recommended that you remain in a clinic setting for 15 minutes following immunization as this is the most common timeframe when anaphylaxis will occur.

## Stay up to date with your vaccinations

Make sure your healthcare provider updates your personal immunization record (yellow card) after you receive a vaccine. Keep your records in a safe place.

If your child attends licensed child care or school, please notify Public Health when a vaccine is given. You can report the vaccines in one of the following ways:

- **Online:** The Immunization Connect Ontario (ICON) tool available at [immunizewdg.ca](http://immunizewdg.ca) allows you to report and view your child's immunization record.
- **Email:** [vaccine.records@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:vaccine.records@wdgpublichealth.ca)
- **Phone:** 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4396
- **Fax:** 1-519-836-2986

## For more information visit:

- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health: [wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca)
- Ontario Ministry of Health: [www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines](http://www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines)
- Immunize Canada: [www.immunize.ca](http://www.immunize.ca)
- Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario: [www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunization/schedule.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunization/schedule.aspx)