

# Meningococcal Conjugate Quadrivalent (Men-C-ACYW-135) Vaccine

## Public Health - Factsheet

Immunization is one of the most important accomplishments in public health that has, over the past 50 years, led to the elimination, containment and control of diseases that were once very common in Canada.<sup>1</sup> Vaccines help your immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause disease.

### What is Meningococcal Disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by a bacteria. There are several different strains of the meningococcal bacteria with the most common strains being A, B, C, Y and W-135.

Meningococcal infection could lead to meningitis or septicemia (infection of the blood) or both. Symptoms of the disease can develop within two to 10 days of infection. Signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease may include sudden onset of high fever, rash, intense headache, nausea, vomiting, light sensitivity, confusion, and a stiff neck.

Meningococcal disease can cause serious infection and can lead to death, even with quick help from a doctor or nurse. Approximately 10 per cent of people will die from the infection and 10 to 20 per cent of survivors can suffer from permanent brain damage, hearing loss, or loss of their arms or legs.

It is spread easily from person-to-person by coughing, sneezing, kissing, or sharing food, drink, musical instruments, water bottles, cigarettes or other things that have been in the mouth of the person with meningococcal disease.

Treatment is with antibiotics and a person can spread the disease from seven days before symptoms appear up to 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has started. Treatment with antibiotics will not treat any damage that has already occurred. It can only prevent further damage. Prevention of the disease through immunization is recommended.

In Canada, meningococcal disease is reported year-round with peaks in winter. Although people at any age can contract meningococcal disease, children younger than five are at greatest risk, followed by people aged 15 to 19 years and 60

years and up. The strains B, C, Y and W-135 are the most commonly reported strains in Canada.

### What is the Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine?

The meningococcal conjugate quadrivalent (Men-C-ACYW-135) vaccine is approved by Health Canada and provides protection against meningococcal disease that is caused by the strains A, C, Y and W-135. This vaccine is given by needle.

### Why should I get the Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine?

Immunization is the best way to protect you and your child(ren) against disease/s that can often be serious and sometimes fatal.

Vaccines help prepare your body to fight potential future exposure to the meningococcal bacteria by getting your immune system ready.

The vaccine helps to protect you, your family, and other people in your community.

Meningococcal vaccines are very effective at preventing disease. To ensure maximum protection against meningococcal disease, it is important to ensure all doses are received based on Manitoba's Recommended Routine Immunization Schedule.

### Possible side-effects of the Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine

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

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.

<sup>1</sup> Public Health Agency. *Canadian Immunization Guide*  
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/p01-02-eng.php>

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**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.**

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It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is a rare possibility of a severe allergic reaction. This can include hives, difficulty breathing or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department for immediate attention should any reaction occur after leaving the clinic.

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

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## Who should get the Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine?

The Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine is provided free of charge when part of Manitoba's Immunization Program.

All children born during or after January 2008 are eligible for one dose of the Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine. It is routinely offered to all children in grade six as part of Manitoba's School Immunization Program. If missed, the vaccine 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 get Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine free-of-charge, including:

- those with no spleen or a spleen that is not working properly
- complement, properdin, factor D or primary antibody deficient
- persons with acquired complement deficiency due to receipt of the terminal complement inhibitor eculizumab (Soliris™)
- certain genetic risk factors (e.g. polymorphisms in the genes for mannose-binding lectin and tumor necrosis factor)
- immunocompetent HIV-Infected
- hematopoietic stem cell transplantation
- solid organ transplantation

- patients currently under the care of a hematologist or oncologist from CancerCare Manitoba

More than one dose may be required for those at higher risk. Speak with your health care provider to see if you are eligible to receive the Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine free-of-charge as part of the recommended immunization schedule and to determine the number of doses required to provide the required protection against this disease.

Or visit:

**The Manitoba Public Health website:**

[www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/vaccineeligibility.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/vaccineeligibility.html)

## Who should not get the Men-C-ACYW-135 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 not be immunized. The vaccine can still be given if the illness is mild, like a cold.

## Your record of protection

Make sure your immunization provider updates your immunization record card or that of your child(ren), after you receive an immunization. Keep the card in a safe place!

All immunizations administered are recorded on an individual's immunization record in Manitoba's immunization registry. This registry:

- allows the health care provider to find out which immunizations you or your child(ren) have had or need to have
- may be used to produce immunization records, or notify you or your health care provider if a particular immunization has been missed
- allows Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living and public health officials to monitor how well vaccines work in preventing disease

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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 additional information, please contact your local public health office or speak with a health care provider.

If you need information on the immunizations that you or your child(ren) have received, contact your health care provider. Contact your local public health office for a copy of your or your child(ren)'s immunization records.

For a listing of public health offices please visit:

[www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html)

## For more information on the Men-C-ACYW-135 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**

[www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/index.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/index.html)

**Government of Canada website**

<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-living-vie-saine/immunization-immunisation/index-eng.php>

For the most current version or other vaccine factsheets and resources visit:

[www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/vaccines.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/vaccines.html)