

Meningococcal Disease

1. What is meningococcal disease?

Meningitis is caused by many kinds of germs. Meningococcal disease is caused by a bacterium (germ) called *Neisseria meningitidis*. This germ can be found in the nose and throat. One out of every ten people will carry this germ without getting sick.

2. How does meningococcal disease spread?

This germ spreads from one person to another when there's direct contact with saliva (spit) or air droplets that come out while coughing or sneezing. Close contact (like kissing), living in the same household, or sharing utensils, food, or drinks, can also spread this germ.

3. What are the signs of meningococcal disease?

If you have some of these symptoms, get medical care right away.

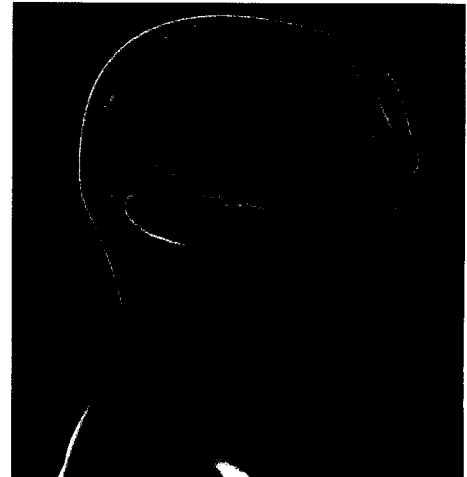
- High fever
- Stiff neck
- Confusion
- Rash
- Bad headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Low blood pressure
- Muscle pain all over the body

4. How is meningococcal disease treated?

This disease may be cured if treated early with antibiotics (medicine that kills bacteria). Antibiotics need to be prescribed by a doctor. The doctor will explain how to take antibiotics correctly.

5. How can you prevent the spread of meningococcal disease?

- Don't share utensils, food, drinks, lip balm, or cigarettes.
- Use your elbow or a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Limit close contact with people who are sick.
- Talk to your doctor about vaccination if you think you have a higher chance of getting sick. If you've had recent close contact with a person that's just had this disease, contact your doctor right away to get preventative medicine.
- Vaccination is recommended for children and adults 2 months and older who are HIV positive, college students who live in dorms, workers in medical labs, people that are less able to fight off disease, and children and teens ages 11-12 with a second vaccine at 16 years old.



Key Points

- Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria (germs) and can be treated with antibiotics.
- Don't share utensils, food, or other items that may spread germs through saliva.
- Keep up healthy habits like not smoking and staying away from people who are sick.
- Talk to your doctor to see if vaccination is right for you.

For more information:

**Los Angeles County,
Department of Public Health**
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/>

**California Department of
Public Health**
www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo

**Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC)**
www.cdc.gov/diseasesconditions

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Meningococcal ACWY Vaccines – MenACWY and MPSV4: *What You Need to Know*

Many Vaccine Information Statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See www.immunize.org/vis

Hojas de Información Sobre Vacunas están disponibles en español y en muchos otros idiomas. Visite www.immunize.org/vis

1 Why get vaccinated?

Meningococcal disease is a serious illness caused by a type of bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. It can lead to meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and infections of the blood. Meningococcal disease often occurs without warning—even among people who are otherwise healthy.

Meningococcal disease can spread from person to person through close contact (coughing or kissing) or lengthy contact, especially among people living in the same household.

There are at least 12 types of *N. meningitidis*, called “serogroups.” Serogroups A, B, C, W, and Y cause most meningococcal disease.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease but certain people are at increased risk, including:

- Infants younger than one year old
- Adolescents and young adults 16 through 23 years old
- People with certain medical conditions that affect the immune system
- Microbiologists who routinely work with isolates of *N. meningitidis*
- People at risk because of an outbreak in their community

Even when it is treated, meningococcal disease kills 10 to 15 infected people out of 100. And of those who survive, about 10 to 20 out of every 100 will suffer disabilities such as hearing loss, brain damage, kidney damage, amputations, nervous system problems, or severe scars from skin grafts.

Meningococcal ACWY vaccines can help prevent meningococcal disease caused by serogroups A, C, W, and Y. A different meningococcal vaccine is available to help protect against serogroup B.

2 Meningococcal ACWY Vaccines

There are two kinds of meningococcal vaccines licensed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for protection against serogroups A, C, W, and Y: meningococcal conjugate vaccine (**MenACWY**) and meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine (**MPSV4**).

Two doses of MenACWY are routinely recommended for adolescents 11 through 18 years old: the first dose at 11 or 12 years old, with a booster dose at age 16. Some adolescents, including those with HIV, should get additional doses. Ask your health care provider for more information.

In addition to routine vaccination for adolescents, MenACWY vaccine is also recommended for certain groups of people:

- People at risk because of a serogroup A, C, W, or Y meningococcal disease outbreak
- Anyone whose spleen is damaged or has been removed
- Anyone with a rare immune system condition called “persistent complement component deficiency”
- Anyone taking a drug called eculizumab (also called Soliris®)
- Microbiologists who routinely work with isolates of *N. meningitidis*
- Anyone traveling to, or living in, a part of the world where meningococcal disease is common, such as parts of Africa
- College freshmen living in dormitories
- U.S. military recruits

Children between 2 and 23 months old, and people with certain medical conditions need multiple doses for adequate protection. Ask your health care provider about the number and timing of doses, and the need for booster doses.

MenACWY is the preferred vaccine for people in these groups who are 2 months through 55 years old, have received MenACWY previously, or anticipate requiring multiple doses.

MPSV4 is recommended for adults older than 55 who anticipate requiring only a single dose (travelers, or during community outbreaks).



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention