



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

Vaccines are one of the best advancements in public health, and also the most cost-effective way to protect yourself and your family against serious infectious diseases and epidemics. The Canadian Paediatric Society and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) strongly recommend routine immunizations.

Meningococcal conjugate ACYW-135 vaccine provides protection against *Neisseria Meningitidis*, serogroups A, C, Y and W-135.

### What is Invasive Meningococcal disease (IMD)?

Invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) is caused by *Neisseria Meningitidis* bacterium. Almost all cases of IMD are caused by the serotypes A, B, C, Y and W-135. IMD is transmitted from person-to-person through contact with respiratory secretions (coughing, sneezing, sharing food and water bottles) of an infected person.

Symptoms of IMD usually include acute fever and progression to meningitis. Meningococcal meningitis is an infection which leads to inflammation of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord. Meningitis symptoms include intense headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, light sensitivity, and stiff neck. Another possible complication is meningococemia, which is a blood infection, symptoms of which include circulatory collapse, bleeding skin rash, and a high fatality rate. Overall, about 10% of people that contract IMD can die. 10-20% of survivors of IMD have long term health effects, including hearing loss, neurologic disabilities, and finger or limb amputation.

### When should the vaccine be given?

The vaccine should be given prior to exposure to IMD.

Meningococcal conjugate ACYW-135 vaccine is indicated for active immunization for the prevention of disease IMD in persons 9 months through 55 years of age (Menactra®) and in persons 2 months through 55 years of age (Menveo™). According to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), Men-C-ACYW135 (Menactra® or Menveo™) may also be used in individuals over the age of 55 years.

Students in grade 7 are eligible to receive a single dose of publicly funded Meningococcal conjugate ACYW-135 vaccine. Anyone born on or after 1997/January/01, remain eligible for a single dose of publicly funded Meningococcal conjugate ACYW-135 vaccine.

Meningococcal conjugate ACYW-135 vaccine is publicly funded for persons 9 months to 55 years of age at high-risk of IMD including those with the conditions listed below.

Individuals at high risk of IMD include those:

- With functional or anatomic asplenia
- With complement, properdin, factor D deficiency or primary antibody deficiencies
- With receipt of cochlear implants (pre/post implant)
- With acquired complement deficiencies (i.e. receiving eculizumab)
- With HIV infection
- With history of Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant (HSCT)
- Those who are close contacts of a case of vaccine preventable IMD (in consultation with the APH Infectious Diseases Program)

For low risk groups, routine booster doses are not currently recommended. Persons at higher risk of disease (such as travellers or persons with certain medical conditions) may require boosters. For those indicated, boosters are usually recommended for every 5 years.

### **How well will this vaccine protect?**

Meningococcal conjugate ACYW-135 vaccine is very effective but may not protect 100% of individuals. Persons who are immunocompromised (disease, medication, solid organ transplant recipients, etc.) may not respond as effectively to vaccination.

### **Possible Side Effects**

The most common reaction to immunization is redness, tenderness and swelling where the injection was given. Fever, nausea, dizziness and headache can also occur. Allergic reactions causing hives, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or swelling of the face and mouth are very rare. You should always discuss the benefits and risks of any vaccine with your doctor or health care provider.

### **Always report any serious reactions to your doctor or health care provider.**

Go to a hospital emergency room if you have any of the following symptoms of a bad allergic reaction such as itchy hives, swelling of the lips, face, tongue, legs/arms or difficulty breathing.

### **Who should get this vaccine?**

Menactra is available for individuals 2 years of age and older. Menveo is available for individuals 2 months of age and older. In Ontario, Menactra is provided free of charge to students in Grade 7. It is a required vaccine for school attendance under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*.

The vaccine is also recommended for certain travelers, including armed forces personnel, and other high risk groups. This vaccine is especially indicated in those travelling to sub-Saharan Africa and Saudi-Arabia.

Talk to your health care provider to determine if you should receive this vaccine. Those who have previously been immunized with Meningococcal C may still receive this vaccine.

### **Who Should Not Receive The Vaccine?**

You should not receive the vaccine if you have allergies to the vaccine or any component of the vaccine. Vaccination will be delayed if you have a fever or anything more serious than a cold. The vaccine will not be given if you are pregnant. If you have previously received a dose of meningococcal vaccine, talk to your health care provider to determine if you need another dose.

### **Who should I talk to if I have any questions?**

Algoma Public Health, Infectious Diseases – Immunization phone line (705) 759-5409  
[www.algomapublichealth.com](http://www.algomapublichealth.com) or your health care provider

### **Your record of protection.**

After any immunization is received, a record or yellow card should be updated. Keep your records in a safe place. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide immunization records for all school children to the local public health unit. Don't forget to update the health unit when/if you or your child gets another immunization.