



Algoma
PUBLIC HEALTH
Santé publique Algoma

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

Vaccines are one of the best advancements in public health, and a safe way to protect yourself and your family against serious infections. The Meningococcal Conjugate ACYW-135 vaccine provides protection against several different serotypes of Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD).

What is IMD?

IMD is caused by a bacteria called *Neisseria Meningitidis*. There are several different groups or serotypes of this bacteria. This vaccine protects against the serotypes A, C, Y or W-135, which are common causes of IMD. IMD can cause an infection of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis), or a blood infection called meningococemia. About 15% of people that get IMD will die, and 10-20% of survivors will have long term health effects. These include hearing loss, neurological damage, or limb loss. IMD is transmitted from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing. It can also spread through kissing or sharing food and water bottles with an infected person. IMD can be passed from one person to another before the infected person even knows they have it.

When Should the Vaccine be Given?

In Ontario this vaccine is routinely given to all Grade 7 students. Anyone born in or after 1997 that has not previously received this vaccine can get a dose at no cost. It is also recommended for people with certain conditions that can weaken their immune system. Your healthcare provider can let you know if you should receive a dose based on your health condition(s). It is also recommended for travelers to certain countries. In this case, depending on your age, you may need to pay for the vaccine.

For low risk groups, routine booster doses are not currently recommended. Persons at higher risk of disease (such as travelers or those with certain medical conditions) may require boosters. Your healthcare provider can tell you if you require a booster.

How Well Will this Vaccine Protect?

Studies show that Meningococcal Conjugate ACYW-135 vaccine is approximately 85% effective. Effectiveness declines over time.

Possible Side Effects

You should always discuss the benefits and risks of any vaccine with your doctor or health care professional. The most common reactions to this vaccine are redness, tenderness and swelling where the injection was given. Fever, nausea, dizziness, chills, tiredness, muscle/joint pain and headache can also occur.

Severe allergic reactions such as hives, wheezing, trouble breathing, or swelling of the face and mouth are very rare. Call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room if you experience any of those side effects, and report them to your doctor or local public health unit.

Who Should Not Get This Vaccine?

You may not be able to receive the vaccine if you:

- have a moderate or severe acute illness
- have had a past severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to this vaccine, or any component of it

Who Should I Talk to if I Have Any Questions?

Contact your healthcare provider. You can also visit www.algomapublichealth.com, or phone the Algoma Public Health Immunization Program at (705) 759-5409, or your local public health office.

Your Record of Protection

Your personal vaccine record should be updated after each immunization you receive. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide immunization records for their school age children to their local public health unit. Immunization Connect Ontario (ICON) is a secure system to view and report immunization information to Algoma Public Health. Visit www.algomapublichealth.com/icon for details.