

Meningococcal B (Men-B) Vaccine

Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.

What is the Men-B vaccine?

The Men-B vaccine protects against meningococcal disease caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* type B bacteria.

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is an infection caused by a bacteria. It can lead to a serious infection of the fluid and lining that cover the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) or blood.

- One out of 5 people with meningococcal disease have a serious infection that causes deafness, seizures, brain damage, or loss of an arm or leg.
- One out of 10 people with meningococcal disease can die.

Who is most at risk?

You are most at risk of infection if you:

- are age 4 years or younger, or ages 15 years to 19 years, or age 60 years and older
- have certain health problems
- live in a crowded home
- travel to areas where there is a high risk of meningococcal disease
- do certain work (such as some lab workers)

How does it spread?

Meningococcal disease spreads through saliva (spit) through kissing or sharing food, toys, or water bottles with someone who has the disease.

Some people do not have symptoms, but can still spread the disease.

Who should get the Men-B vaccine?

You should get this vaccine if you are at risk for meningococcal B disease because of:

- certain health problems
- the type of work you do (such as some lab workers)
- close contact with someone with meningococcal B disease

Talk to a public health nurse to find out if you can get the Men-B vaccine for free.

Other people may also benefit from this vaccine, such as if you travel to an area that has a high risk of meningococcal B disease, but it is not free.

If you cannot get the vaccine for free, check with your health insurance provider to see if your plan covers the cost.

How many doses do I need?

The number of doses you need depends on your age and why you are getting the vaccine.

Ask your health care provider how many doses you need.

Are there other vaccines that protect against meningococcal disease?

MenconC protects against type C meningococcal disease. As part of the routine immunization schedule, children get this vaccine starting at age 4 months.

MenC-ACYW protects against types A, C, Y, and W-135 meningococcal disease. Grade 9 students can get this vaccine as part of the school immunization program. This will boost their protection against type C meningococcal disease and protect them from types A, Y, and W-135. You may also get this vaccine if you travel to an area that has a high risk of meningococcal disease or you have other health problems.

Even if you have had a meningococcal vaccine in the past, you may still need Men-B to protect you from type B meningococcal disease.

How well does the vaccine work?

There is more to learn about how well Men-B vaccine works. Research has shown that it helped to reduce the number of Men-B infections in groups who got this vaccine. Men-B vaccine is the best way to protect yourself from this infection.

Where can I get Men-B vaccine?

If you need the vaccine because of your work (such as some lab workers), talk to your workplace health and safety department.

If you can get this vaccine for free, contact your local public health or community health centre.

If you want the vaccine and need to pay for it, contact a travel health clinic or talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Are there side effects from the Men-B vaccine?

There can be side effects from the Men-B vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness, swelling, a hard spot, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- crying, feeling tired, or getting upset easily
- headache
- fever
- body aches or sore joints
- not feeling hungry or not wanting to eat (poor appetite)
- feeling sick to your stomach (nausea), vomiting (throwing up), or loose stool (diarrhea)
- rash or hives (hives are more common in children under age 2 years)

At least 1 out of 100 people who got this vaccine reported 1 or more of these side effects. In some cases, it is unknown if the vaccine caused these side effects.

It is important to stay for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

How can I manage side effects?

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

Who should not get the Men-B vaccine?

You may not be able to get this vaccine if you:


- have an allergy to any part of the vaccine
- had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it

If you have allergies or have had a side effect from this vaccine, check with your doctor or a public health nurse before you get the vaccine.

Although you can get the vaccine if you have a mild illness such as a cold or fever, you should stay home until you are feeling better to prevent spreading your illness to others.

I have a fear of needles. How can I prepare for my immunization?

Many adults and children are afraid of needles. You can do many things before, during, and after immunization to be more comfortable.

 Scan the QR code, visit ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort, or call Health Link at 811 for information.

For more information about immunization



Call Health Link at **811**



Scan the QR code or go to ahs.ca/immunize