



OVERVIEW OF MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS

Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (ACW Y) and Serogroup B Meningococcal Vaccine

Who is at risk?

Meningococcal Meningitis is an infection that affects the delicate membranes, called meninges that cover the brain and spinal cord. There are several types of this disease, including bacterial, viral, and fungal. Adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to the disease. **College freshmen living in dormitories are at a higher risk for meningococcal disease compared to other people of the same age.**

How is Meningococcal Meningitis Spread?

Meningococcal bacteria are transmitted through the air via droplets of respiratory secretions and direct contact with the persons infected with the disease. This can include coughing, sneezing, kissing or sharing items like utensils and drinking glasses.

What are symptoms?

Symptoms include high fever, headache, stiff neck, confusion, nausea, vomiting and exhaustion. In later stages, a rash may appear. Adolescents and young adults should seek medical attention immediately if they notice unusually sudden or severe symptoms of the disease.

Meningococcal disease, although rare, is devastating because early symptoms resemble the flu, making it difficult to recognize. However, unlike the flu, the disease can progress rapidly and within hours of initial symptoms, may cause hearing loss, brain damage, limb amputation and even death.

How can Meningococcal Meningitis be prevented?

CDC states all adolescents and college students wishing to reduce their risk may elect to be immunized if not previously vaccinated. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American College Health Association also supports these recommendations.

The **Meningococcal Meningitis Vaccine** offers protection against certain strains of Neisseria Meningitis. There are at least 12 types of N. meningitides, called "serogroups." Serogroups A, B, C, W, and Y cause most meningococcal disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendation routine vaccination with meningococcal conjugate vaccine.

•**Meningococcal conjugate vaccines** (Serogroups ACW Y) (Menactra® or Menveo®) 2-dose series: 11-12 years and 1-booster given after age 16 or before age 22. This vaccine is required.

•**Serogroup B meningococcal** (Serogroup B) vaccines (Bexsero® or Trumenba®) 2-doses given after age 16 and before age 23. College campuses have reported outbreaks of serogroup B meningococcal disease during the last several years. Meningococcal conjugate vaccines (Serogroups ACW Y) do not include protection against serogroup B meningococcal disease. CDC also strongly recommends the use of a serogroup B meningococcal vaccine for people identified to be at increased risk.

Meningitis vaccines are available through your family physician or clinics. **The Wildcat Health Clinic also provides both the Meningococcal conjugated vaccine and the Serogroup B meningococcal vaccine.**

The following are Web sites that provide more information about meningococcal disease and immunization:

- National Meningitis Association, www.nmaus.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/risk-community>
- Adult Vaccination, <http://www.adultvaccination.org>