Meningococcal Conjugate A, C, Y and W-135 Vaccine

Keep your child and yourself safe. By getting all vaccines on time, you and your child can be protected from many vaccine preventable diseases over your lifetimes. Immunizations have saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health measure.

What is meningococcal disease?
- **Meningococcal disease** caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria causes serious, life-threatening infections including:
  - Meningitis (an infection of the lining that covers the brain).
  - Septicemia (an infection of the blood).
- Complications from the disease include limb amputations, hearing loss, permanent brain damage, seizures and skin scarring.
- Even with antibiotic treatment, 10-15% of people die.
- Many cases occur in adolescents and young adults.

What are the symptoms of meningococcal disease?
- Disease occurs within 2 to 10 days after contact with the bacteria.
- It starts with sudden symptoms such as fever, chills, tiredness, and irritability. Young children may cry excessively. A severe headache, stiff neck and/or a tiny reddish-purple or bruise-like rash on the body occurs soon afterwards.

How are meningococcal bacteria spread?
- Through coughing and sneezing, close face-to-face contact, through saliva and by kissing.
- Many people carry the *Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria in their nose and throat but do not become sick.

How can meningococcal disease be prevented?
- Be immunized. Meningococcal bacteria types A, C, Y and W-135 are vaccine-preventable.
- This vaccine does not protect against other meningococcal bacterial serotypes.
- **It is important to see a doctor if you have symptoms.**
- Within 24 hours of taking antibiotics, people are no longer infectious to others.
- Avoid direct contact with droplets from the nose or throat.
- Practice good hygiene (e.g. handwashing).
- Don’t share food, drinks, cigarettes, straws, dishes, musical instrument mouthpieces, lip care products, water bottles, mouth guards used for sports, baby bottles, soothers or toys.

Who can get this vaccine free of charge in Saskatchewan?
- Children in grade 6 as part of the routine immunization program.

This vaccine is also provided to children and adults whose medical conditions put them at high-risk of getting meningococcal disease.
This includes those who:
- Have been in close contact with a person with meningococcal disease or who are at risk of infection during an outbreak.
- Have no spleen or a spleen that is not working properly.
- Have a congenital immune system disorder (including complement, properdin, factor D deficiency, primary antibody deficiencies).
- Are solid organ transplant candidates or recipients.
- Are islet cell transplant candidates or recipients.
- Received a cochlear (inner ear) implant or are waiting for one.
- Had a hematopoietic stem cell transplant.
- Have a cerebrospinal fluid leak or hydrocephaly.

Who should not get the vaccine?
A mild illness, with or without a fever, is not a reason to avoid immunization.
- Persons who have a serious illness, with or without fever, should delay immunization.
- Persons who have had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine or serious allergies to any of the vaccine components.
- If you have a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), speak to your health care provider to see if this vaccine is right for you.
What are possible reactions to the vaccine?

Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get meningococcal disease.

Common reactions to the vaccine may include:

- Soreness, redness and swelling at the injection site.
- Headache, tiredness, diarrhea, irritability, loss of appetite or fever may occur within 24 hours after getting the vaccine.
- These reactions are mild and generally last 1 to 2 days.
- It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. **If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number.** This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in one million people.

**Acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Tempra) can be given for fever or soreness. ASA (Aspirin®) should NOT be given to anyone under 20 years of age due to the risk of Reye’s syndrome.**

Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any severe, unusual or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, your doctor, or nurse practitioner as soon as possible.

Talk to your public health nurse if:

- You have questions or concerns about your or your child’s reaction to a vaccine.
- You had to take your child to a doctor, hospital or health center with side effects that might be related to getting a vaccine.

What does the vaccine contain?

- Menactra® contains meningococcal A, C, Y and W-135 polysaccharides, diphtheria toxoid protein, sodium chloride, sodium phosphate (dibasic, anhydrous), sodium phosphate (monobasic), and water for injection. The vaccine does not contain thimerosal. The prefilled syringes are latex-free.

- Menevo™ contains meningococcal A, C, Y and W-135 oligosaccharides, diphtheria CRM197 protein, potassium dihydrogen phosphate, sucrose, sodium chloride, sodium dihydrogen phosphate monohydrate, di-sodium hydrogen phosphate dihydrate, water for injection. The vaccine does not contain thimerosal and is latex-free.

- NIMENRIX™ contains Neisseria meningitidis serogroup A polysaccharide, Neisseria meningitidis serogroup C polysaccharide, Neisseria meningitidis serogroup W-135 polysaccharide, Neisseria meningitidis serogroup Y polysaccharide, sucrose, trometamol, sodium chloride, water for injection. The vaccine does not contain thimerosal. The manufacturer cannot guarantee that the vaccine is latex-free.

**Mature Minor Consent**

It is recommended that parents/guardians and their children discuss consent for immunization. Efforts are first made to get parental/guardian consent for immunizations. However, children at least 13 years of age up to and including 17 years of age, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risks of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations in Saskatchewan by providing mature minor informed consent to a healthcare provider.

Your immunization information will be recorded in a computerized system known as the Saskatchewan Immunization Management System (SIMS). Information collected in SIMS may be used to:

- Manage immunization records;
- Notify you if you or your child needs an immunization; and
- Monitor how well vaccines work in preventing vaccine preventable diseases.

Your immunization records may also be shared with health care professionals in order to provide public health services; assist with diagnosis and treatment; and to control the spread of vaccine preventable diseases.

For more information contact your local public health office, your physician, nurse practitioner OR HealthLine at 811.