

Meningococcal (type C) Conjugate Vaccine

What is meningococcal disease?

- Meningococcal disease is a serious illness caused by several different strains of the bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis*
- This bacteria can cause meningitis (an infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) or meningococemia (an infection of the blood)
- The bacteria which may cause this illness is commonly found in the nose and throat secretions of healthy people
- Exposure to the bacteria occurs through direct contact with saliva or sharing of oral secretions (i.e. sharing drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, etc)
- Strain type C is one of the five most common strains of meningococcal disease

What are the symptoms of meningococcal disease?

- Sudden onset of high fever
- Severe headache
- Stiff neck
- Sensitivity to light
- Drowsiness/impaired consciousness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Reddish skin rash

How can I reduce the risk of meningococcal (type C) disease?

- Get the vaccine
- Don't share water bottles, drinks, cigarettes, toothbrushes, lipstick, utensils, etc. with other people

Facts about meningococcal (type C) vaccine:

- The vaccine will not prevent all types of meningitis, but does protect against one of the more common and deadly strains causing this disease
- Only one dose is required for individuals one year of age or older

- The vaccine protects 90% of people who receive the recommended dose
- The meningococcal (type C) vaccine is voluntary
- If you have received or if you plan to be immunized with the meningococcal (type ACYW-135) quadrivalent vaccine, a period of one month between the meningococcal (type C) vaccine and the meningococcal (type ACYW-135) quadrivalent vaccine is recommended
- Meningococcal (type ACYW-135) *polysaccharide* and Act-HIB *conjugate* vaccines are different from this vaccine
- If at least 6 months have passed since you received the meningococcal (type ACYW-135) *polysaccharide* vaccine, it is safe and advisable to receive this meningococcal (type C) *conjugate* vaccine

Please note that individuals will need to be monitored for 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine

Who *should not* get the meningococcal (type C) conjugate vaccine?

A health care professional may decide not to give the vaccine to a person who:

- is ill with fever or serious infection worse than a cold
- had a serious allergic reaction to this vaccine in the past
- has a severe allergic reaction to any component of the vaccine including aluminum hydroxide and tetanus toxoid
- has a disease or is taking a medication that lower the body's ability to fight infections
- is pregnant or breastfeeding. The safety of these vaccines during pregnancy and breastfeeding has not been studied. The vaccine should not be given to pregnant or breastfeeding women unless there is an increased risk of meningococcal (type C) disease.
- has religious or philosophical objections to any components of the vaccine

Who is able to receive the vaccine for free?

- All children on or after their 1st birthday
- Children who were 1 year of age on or after September 2004
- Individuals born between 1986 and 1996.
- Individuals who have been in close contact with a person who has meningococcal (type C) disease

What are the possible side effects of meningococcal (type C) conjugate vaccine?

- Local reactions may include: redness, soreness or swelling at the injection site, fever, headache, tiredness and/or muscle aches
- Severe reactions are very rare and may include: trouble breathing, swelling of the face or mouth, hives or a fever over 39 °C

Note: Consult a pharmacist if you require medicine for fever or pain. Acetylsalicylic acid (ASA or Aspirin®) must **NOT** be given to children under 18 years of age.

Report a serious reaction to your doctor and Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700

Please report any new immunizations you receive to Peel Public Health:

- Online at www.ImmunizePeel.ca
- Call 905-799-7700 (Caledon residents can call free-of-charge at 905-584-2216)
- Fax to **905-565-0426**

When should I see a health care professional after vaccination?

Vaccine recipients should see a health care professional if they have any of the following symptoms within 3 days of getting the vaccine:

- high fever (over 40°C or 104°F)
- a screaming episode – the child cries/screams for at least three hours or the sound of the cry is very different
- convulsions or seizures
- very pale skin colour and/or unusual drowsiness
- hives (itchy rash)
- swelling of the face or mouth
- trouble breathing
- other serious reactions

For more information please contact Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700 or visit our web site at www.ImmunizePeel.ca

References:

Health Canada. Canadian Immunization Guide. 7th edition, 2006.
Public Health Agency of Canada, <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/index.html>
NeisVac-C® Vaccine Product Monograph, GlaxoSmithKline Inc, January 21, 2009.
http://www.gsk.ca/english/docs-pdf/NeisVac-C_PM_20090121_EN.pdf