

## Meningococcal C Conjugate (Men-C) Vaccine

**Keep your child safe.  
Get all shots on time.**

By getting all shots on time, your child can be protected from many diseases over a lifetime.

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health measure.

### What is Men-C vaccine?

The Men-C vaccine protects against infection from one of the most common types of meningococcal bacteria, type C. The vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

The Men-C vaccine is provided free as part of your child's routine immunizations. Call your public health nurse or doctor to make an appointment.

### Who should get the Men-C vaccine?

The Men-C vaccine is given to infants as a series of two doses or shots. The first is given at 2 months of age, and the second at 12 months. The vaccine is given at the same time as other childhood immunizations.

Men-C Vaccine	Child's Age at Vaccination
1 <sup>st</sup> dose	2 months
2 <sup>nd</sup> dose	12 months

The Men-C vaccine is also given to older children in grade 6 and to those who have:

- no spleen, or a spleen that is not working properly

- an immune system weakened by disease or a medical treatment
- an islet cell or solid organ transplant, or a cochlear (inner ear) implant, or are waiting for one
- had a stem cell transplant.

The vaccine may also be given to people who have been in close contact with someone who is infected with meningococcal bacteria type C.

It is important to keep a record of all immunizations received.

### Benefits of Men-C Vaccine

The Men-C vaccine is the best way to protect your child against meningococcal type C infection, a serious and sometimes fatal disease.

When you get your child vaccinated, you help protect others as well.

### Possible Reactions after 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 where the shot was given. Fever, drowsiness, crankiness, loss of appetite or mild headache may also occur within 24 hours after getting the vaccine. These reactions are mild and generally last 1 to 2 days.

Acetaminophen or Tylenol® can be given for fever or soreness. ASA or Aspirin® should NOT be given to anyone under 20 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

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 a million people who get the vaccine.

**Report serious or unexpected reactions to your public health nurse or doctor.**

### Who should not get the Men-C vaccine?

Speak with a public health nurse or doctor if your child has had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of meningococcal vaccine, or any component of the vaccine, or to latex.

### What is meningococcal C infection?

Meningococcal C infection is caused by a germ (or bacteria) called meningococcal type C. It can cause serious and life-threatening infections including meningitis, an infection of the lining that covers the brain, and septicemia, an infection of the blood. For every 100 children who get sick, up to 15 will die. Permanent complications of infection include brain damage and deafness.

Meningococcal infection is spread from one person to another by coughing, sneezing, or close face-to-face contact. It can also be spread through saliva or spit. Babies and young children can become sick through sharing soothers, bottles or toys used by

other children. Older children and teenagers can become sick through activities such as kissing, or sharing of food, drinks, cigarettes, lipstick, water bottles, mouth guards used for sports or mouthpieces of musical instruments.

Meningococcal type C disease is now rare in BC because of routine childhood vaccination programs.

### Mature Minor Consent

Every effort is made to seek parental or guardian informed consent prior to immunization. Children under the age of 19 who are able to understand the risks and benefits may consent to or refuse immunizations, regardless of the parent's or guardian's wishes. It is recommended that parents/guardians and their minor children discuss immunizations beforehand, and ask the nurse or doctor any questions.

For more BC HealthFile topics visit [www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm](http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm), or visit your local public health unit.

Call the BC NurseLine to speak to a registered nurse, available 24-hours every day:

- In Greater Vancouver, call 604-215-4700
- In BC, call toll-free 1-866-215-4700
- Deaf and hearing-impaired, call 1-866-889-4700
- Pharmacist available 5pm to 9am every day
- Translation services in over 130 languages upon request.

Visit BC HealthGuide OnLine – a world of health information you can trust at [www.bchealthguide.org](http://www.bchealthguide.org)



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