

## What are the types of meningococcal vaccine?



The first meningococcal vaccine became available in 1978. In 2005 a newer form was licensed that provides longer protection against the disease. The vaccines do not contain live germs, so they cannot make you sick with meningococcal disease.



## Who should get meningococcal vaccine?

Routine vaccination is recommended for all children and adolescents aged 11 to 18 years.

Meningococcal vaccination is also recommended for persons who are at increased risk for meningococcal disease. These include:

- Incoming college freshmen or military recruits who will live in dormitories or barracks
- Anyone with an immune system disorder
- Anyone with a damaged spleen, or whose spleen has been removed
- Certain groups of people during a meningococcal outbreak

## What are the side effects of vaccination?

Meningococcal vaccines are safe and effective. As with all vaccines, there can be minor reactions, including pain and redness at the injection site or a mild fever, which typically last for one to two days. Severe side effects, such as a serious allergic reaction, are very rare.

## Where can I get more information about meningococcal disease?



- Your health care provider
- Your local health department
- NJDHSS Vaccine Preventable Disease Program website, <http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/vpdphome.htm>
- Vaccine Information Statement, <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-mening.pdf>



# Preventing meningococcal disease



## What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is a severe infection of the blood or the meninges (the covering of the brain and spinal cord). It is caused by a bacterium (germ) called *Neisseria meningitidis*.



About 5 to 20% of people carry these germs in their noses and throats and do not get sick from them. In rare cases the germs may get into the blood or the tissue surrounding the spine and brain and cause severe illness.



## Who gets meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is most common in babies, but teens and young adults are also at risk. College students and military recruits are slightly more likely to get the disease because of time spent in crowded living conditions like dorms or barracks.

## Why should I be concerned about meningococcal disease?

The disease is rare but very serious. Over 10% of people who get meningococcal disease die, and about 20% of survivors are left with permanent disabilities.



## How do people get meningococcal disease?

The germs are spread from person to person through saliva (spit) or mucus. You must be in **close contact** with a sick person's secretions in order for the germs to spread.

Close contact includes activities such as:

- living in the same household
- kissing
- sharing eating utensils, food or drink
- uncovered face-to-face sneezing or coughing



## What are the symptoms of meningococcal disease?

Common symptoms are:

- fever
- headache
- nausea
- vomiting
- feeling very tired or sleepy
- stiff neck
- confusion

Later in the illness, a rash appearing as red spots or purple blotches on the arms, legs or torso may be seen.

## How can meningococcal disease be prevented?

Getting vaccinated against meningococcal disease will protect people from getting this disease.



Two types of meningococcal vaccine are available. Both vaccines are about 90% effective in protecting against the most common strains of meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal vaccine can protect YOUR child against this deadly infection.