

Meningococcal disease is serious...

Make sure your child is protected!

What is meningococcal disease?

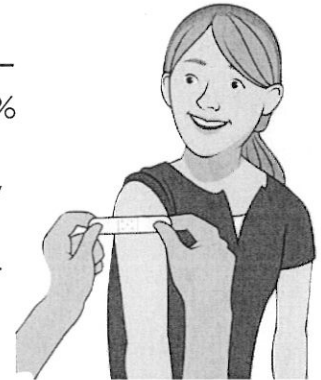
Meningococcal disease is a life-threatening illness. It is caused by bacteria that infect the blood, brain, and spinal cord. People often call it meningitis.

How do you catch it?

The disease is spread person-to-person. It is easily spread in crowded settings. You can catch meningitis from a person who looks healthy.

Is meningococcal disease serious?

Yes! Even with proper treatment, 10–15% of people with meningococcal disease die. Of the people who survive, as many as 20% suffer from some serious complication, such as loss of an arm or leg, brain damage, or permanent hearing loss.



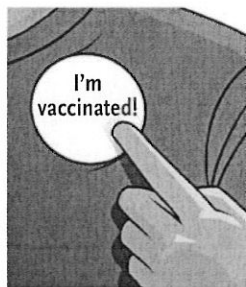
Ask your child's healthcare provider if your child is up to date for all vaccines!

Meningitis can cause shock, coma, and death within hours of the first symptom.

Is my child at risk?

The disease most often strikes older teens and young adults. If your child travels internationally or has certain medical conditions, he or she may also be at increased risk.

How can I protect my child from meningococcal disease?



Vaccination is the best way to prevent meningitis.

All preteens and teens should get 2 doses of meningococcal vaccine. The first dose is usually given at 11–12 years of age.

Some young adults also may need this vaccine.

People of all ages with certain medical conditions should get vaccinated, and some should receive booster doses throughout life. Travelers to certain countries also should get vaccinated.

► For more information, visit www.vaccineinformation.org

For other vaccine handouts in this series, visit www.immunize.org/vaccine-summaries

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Technical content reviewed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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