**Meningococcal-C-ACYW135 Vaccine Fact Sheet**

**MENACTRA®**

---

**What is meningococcal disease?**

- Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. People who have the disease may develop swelling of the lining of their brain and spinal column. The bacteria can also cause an infection in the blood.
- People with meningococcal disease often experience fever, rash, intense headache, nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, and a stiff neck.
- Meningococcal disease often occurs very quickly. It can result in hearing loss, brain damage, and loss of limbs. About 1 in 10 people who get the disease die.
- This bacteria can be found in the nose and throat of about 5-10% of healthy people. These people are called “carriers” of the bacteria.

**How effective is the Meningococcal C-ACYW (Men-C-ACYW135) vaccine?**

- The vaccine protects 4 out of 5 people who get it against four strains of meningococcal disease (A,C,Y,W-135).
- Protection may decrease over time. Booster doses are recommended for people at high risk of getting meningococcal disease. The need for a booster dose in healthy people is still being studied.

**Who should receive the vaccine?**

- Students are routinely immunized in Grade 7.
- Those who are at high risk of getting the disease if they are 2 to 55 years of age.
- High risk people include:
  - People without a spleen
  - People with immune deficiencies
  - People with cochlear implants (often given before the surgery)

**How is meningococcal disease spread?**

- The *Neisseria meningitidis* bacterium can be spread when people come in contact with the fluids of the nose and throat of a “carrier” or a person sick with meningococcal disease.
- This happens through coughing, sneezing, talking, or anything that “swaps spit” such as sharing water bottles, lip gloss, kissing, etc.

**How is the vaccine given?**

- By injection (a needle) into the muscle of the upper arm.
Who should not receive the vaccine?

- Anyone sick with a fever or infection worse than a cold.
- Anyone who has had a severe allergic reaction to the vaccine or its ingredients, including diphtheria toxoid. Ask for a complete list of ingredients.
- Those with a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS).
- Tell the nurse if you have recently received another meningococcal containing vaccine.
- Children less than two years of age.
- People taking medications or with an illness that lowers their immune system should wait until their condition or treatment is over if possible. If you have a long term condition, talk to your doctor before getting this vaccine.
- People with a bleeding disorder should talk to a health care provider before getting the vaccine.
- Pregnant women should talk to a health care provider about the need for the vaccine.

How might a person feel after receiving the vaccine?

- Most people have no serious side effects from the vaccine.
- The most common side effects are short-term and minor like those that happen with other injections:
  - redness, tenderness, and swelling at the injection site
- Other less common side effects include:
  - Irritability, drowsiness, decreased appetite
  - Diarrhea
  - Fever, headache, fatigue, malaise
- Guillain-Barré syndrome (a disease that causes muscle paralysis) was being reported within 6 weeks of getting this vaccine. A large study of 2.2 million people did not show any cases of GBS. GBS occurs normally in 1 of 100,000 people whether they get vaccinated or not.
- Allergic reactions like hives, wheezing, or swelling of the face and mouth are extremely rare. If these symptoms occur, seek medical attention immediately.

References: