

Vaccines (also called “needles” or “baby shots”) are the best way to protect against some very serious infections. The Canadian Paediatric Society and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization strongly recommend routine immunization.

Meningococcal Type C conjugate vaccine protects against Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD) caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*. This vaccine will not prevent all types of meningitis infections, but does protect against one of the more common and deadly strains found in Canada.

What is Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD)?

Meningococcal disease can cause meningitis (a swelling of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) or meningococemia (an infection of the blood stream). The bacteria, commonly found in the nose and throat of healthy people, are spread by activities such as kissing or sharing drinks. People with meningococcal disease may have fever, severe headache, a stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes a red pinpoint rash with bruising. Babies with meningococcal disease may have a high fever, be difficult to wake, lose their appetite, be very irritable, and cry more than normal. They may also develop a red pinpoint rash. Some people may die from meningococcal disease.

At what age should my child be vaccinated with the Meningococcal Type C Conjugate vaccine?

The provincial government pays for one dose of the Meningococcal Type C Conjugate vaccine for children aged 12 months.

This vaccine may be given with other vaccines at separate sites using separate needles. If your child misses a needle, you should get the next needle as soon as possible. Your family health care provider will tell you when to return for future needles.

This vaccine is also publicly funded for:

- all individuals with functional or anatomic asplenia
- all individuals with complement, properdin or factor D deficiency
- HIV-positive individuals

How well does Meningococcal Type C Conjugate vaccine protect my child?

The vaccine is up to 90 per cent effective for those who receive the recommended doses at the right age.

Is the Meningococcal Type C Conjugate vaccine safe?

Yes. Serious side effects are rare. Mild pain, swelling and redness for a few days are common at the spot where the needle was given. Some children get a fever, lose their appetite, have diarrhea, or are fussy or drowsy for a day or two after the vaccination. Your family health care provider may suggest you give your child a medicine called acetaminophen to prevent pain and fever.

Call your family health care provider or local hospital if your child has any of the following within three days of getting the needle:

- high fever (over 40°C or 104°F)
- crying for more than three hours
- convulsions or seizures
- very pale color and serious drowsiness
- hives (itchy rash)
- swelling of the face or mouth
- trouble breathing
- other serious problems

Who should not get the Meningococcal Type C Conjugate vaccine?

Your family health care provider may decide not to give your child's needle or may give a different vaccine if you or your child has:

- a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold
- had an allergic reaction to a previous dose of meningococcal vaccine (Menjugate or NeisVac-C)
- a severe allergy to any parts of the vaccine including: tetanus toxoid (NeisVac-C), diphtheria toxoid (Menjugate), aluminum
- religious or philosophical objections to any part of the vaccine
- pregnant women should discuss the need for Meningococcal C Conjugate vaccine with their doctor
- people with a bleeding disorder should talk to the nurse before getting the vaccine
- infants should be two months of age before receiving the vaccine
- **people who have received the polysaccharide meningococcal vaccine must wait six months before they receive a Meningococcal Conjugate vaccine**

Whom should I talk to if I have any more questions about the Meningococcal Type C Conjugate vaccine?

Talk to your family health care provider or the Huron County Health Unit (519-482-3416) for more information.

Your Record of Protection

After your child receives any immunization, make sure the doctor updates the yellow personal Immunization Record card. Keep it in a safe place!