Meningococcal ACWY Vaccine:
What You Need to Know

Many vaccine information statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See www.immunize.org/vis

Hojas de información sobre vacunas están disponibles en español y en muchos otros idiomas. Visite www.immunize.org/vis

1. Why get vaccinated?

Meningococcal ACWY vaccine can help protect against **meningococcal disease** caused by serogroups A, C, W, and Y. A different meningococcal vaccine is available that can help protect against serogroup B.

Meningococcal disease can cause meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and infections of the blood. Even when it is treated, meningococcal disease kills 10 to 15 infected people out of 100. And of those who survive, about 10 to 20 out of every 100 will suffer disabilities such as hearing loss, brain damage, kidney damage, loss of limbs, nervous system problems, or severe scars from skin grafts.

Meningococcal disease is rare and has declined in the United States since the 1990s. However, it is a severe disease with a significant risk of death or lasting disabilities in people who get it.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease. Certain people are at increased risk, including:

- Infants younger than one year old
- Adolescents and young adults 16 through 23 years old
- People with certain medical conditions that affect the immune system
- Microbiologists who routinely work with isolates of *N. meningitidis*, the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease
- People at risk because of an outbreak in their community

2. Meningococcal ACWY vaccine

Adolescents need 2 doses of a meningococcal ACWY vaccine:

- First dose: 11 or 12 year of age
- Second (booster) dose: 16 years of age

In addition to routine vaccination for adolescents, meningococcal ACWY vaccine is also recommended for **certain groups of people**:

- People at risk because of a serogroup A, C, W, or Y meningococcal disease outbreak
- People with HIV
- Anyone whose spleen is damaged or has been removed, including people with sickle cell disease
- Anyone with a rare immune system condition called "complement component deficiency"
- Anyone taking a type of drug called a "complement inhibitor," such as eculizumab (also called "Soliris"®) or ravulizumab (also called "Ultomiris"®)
- Microbiologists who routinely work with isolates of *N. meningitidis*
- Anyone traveling to or living in a part of the world where meningococcal disease is common, such as parts of Africa
- College freshmen living in residence halls who have not been completely vaccinated with meningococcal ACWY vaccine
- U.S. military recruits

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

3. Talk with your health care provider

Tell your vaccination provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has had an **allergic reaction after a previous dose of meningococcal ACWY vaccine**, or has any **severe, life-threatening allergies**

In some cases, your health care provider may decide to postpone meningococcal ACWY vaccination until a future visit.

There is limited information on the risks of this vaccine for pregnant or breastfeeding people, but no safety concerns have been identified. A pregnant or breastfeeding person should be vaccinated if indicated.

People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting meningococcal ACWY vaccine.

Your health care provider can give you more information.

4. Risks of a vaccine reaction

- Redness or soreness where the shot is given can happen after meningococcal ACWY vaccination.
- A small percentage of people who receive meningococcal ACWY vaccine experience muscle pain, headache, or tiredness.

People sometimes faint after medical procedures, including vaccination. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

5. What if there is a serious problem?

An allergic reaction could occur after the vaccinated person leaves the clinic. If you see signs of a severe allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or weakness), call **9-1-1** and get the person to the nearest hospital.

For other signs that concern you, call your health care provider.

Adverse reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Your health care provider will usually file this report, or you can do it yourself. Visit the VAERS website at **www.vaers.hhs.gov** or call **1-800-822-7967**. *VAERS is only for reporting reactions, and VAERS staff members do not give medical advice.*

6. The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) is a federal program that was created to compensate people who may have been injured by certain vaccines. Claims regarding alleged injury or death due to vaccination have a time limit for filing, which may be as short as two years. Visit the VICP website at **www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation** or call **1-800-338-2382** to learn about the program and about filing a claim.

7. How can I learn more?

- Ask your health care provider.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Visit the website of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for vaccine package inserts and additional information at **www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines**.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
  - Call **1-800-232-4636** (**1-800-CDC-INFO**) or
  - Visit CDC's website at **www.cdc.gov/vaccines**.