



How can I help protect my child from **bacterial meningitis**?

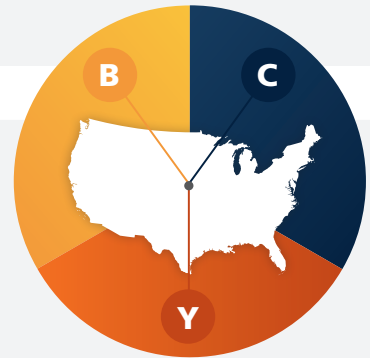
One type of bacterial meningitis is meningococcal meningitis, which is a form of meningococcal disease.

Invasive meningococcal disease is an acute, severe illness caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis* (*N. meningitidis*), also known as meningococcus [muh-ning-goh-KOK-us].

Meningitis is a rare but potentially life-threatening condition caused by inflammation of the protective membranes (“meninges”) covering the brain and spinal cord. This inflammation is usually caused by infection with viruses or bacteria, including *N. meningitidis*.

There are 13 known groups of the bacterium, but 5 of them — **A, B, C, W, and Y** — cause most of the meningococcal disease worldwide.

Three meningococcal groups — **B, C, and Y** — cause most of the illness in people over the age of 11 in the United States. Each of these groups is responsible for about a third of all cases.



There were about 550 cases of meningococcal disease in the United States in 2013.

Risk Factors for Bacterial Meningitis

Infants younger than 1 year and adolescents and young adults 16-23 years of age, people without a spleen, people with certain immune system problems, living in close quarters (such as college dormitories or military barracks), and smoking (active or passive).

How Bacterial Meningitis Is Spread

Close contact can help spread the bacterium through exchanges of saliva and secretions from the nose or throat, including:



Coughing



Sneezing



Kissing

Symptoms of Bacterial Meningitis

Symptoms can progress rapidly — within 24 hours — and can become serious, possibly fatal.



- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Stiff Neck

Additional symptoms may include: nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, confusion.

Impact of Bacterial Meningitis

11 to 19%

of survivors of meningococcal disease will have long-term consequences, including deafness, nervous system problems, brain damage, or loss of limbs.

About 10-15% of people infected with meningococcal disease will die.

Vaccines to Help Prevent Bacterial Meningitis

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), keeping up-to-date with recommended vaccines is the best defense against acquiring bacterial meningitis, although vaccination may not result in protection in all recipients.

There are separate vaccines for meningococcal groups ACWY disease (**MenACWY disease**) and meningococcal group B disease (**MenB disease**).

MenACWY Vaccine

- There are quadrivalent (4-group) vaccines that help protect against groups A, C, W, and Y. These have been available in the United States since the 1980s.
- The CDC recommends MenACWY vaccination for all adolescents 11-12 years of age, with a booster at age 16 (before the period of increased risk).

MenB Vaccine

- MenB disease is different from MenACWY disease, so a different type of vaccine was needed.
- MenB vaccines were not available in the United States until October 2014.
- According to the CDC, MenB vaccination may be administered to adolescents and young adults 16-23 years of age, preferably 16-18 years of age, to help protect against MenB disease.

There are 2 different vaccines that can help protect your child against the 5 common meningococcal groups.

Talk to your child’s healthcare provider about: ✓ MenACWY vaccination ✓ MenB vaccination