



Factsheet: Meningococcal Disease and Meningococcal Vaccine

DISEASE

- Invasive meningococcal disease occurs in three common clinical forms: meningitis (50% of cases), blood infection (30%) and pneumonia (10%); other forms account for the remainder (10%) of the cases
- Onset can be abrupt and course of disease rapid
- Case fatality rate is 10%-14%; 11%-19% of survivors suffer serious sequelae (a condition caused by previous disease) including deafness, neurologic deficit, or limb loss

EPIDEMIOLOGY

- Rates highest in infancy with second peak in adolescence with the peak around 18 years of age
- Annually, about 1,000 cases of invasive meningococcal disease occur in the US
 - 20% of cases occurs among adolescents and young adults ages 14-24
 - 16% of cases occurs among infants under 1 year of age
- College Freshman living in dormitories are at higher risk than general population of similar age
- Most cases are sporadic (97%); a minority is associated with outbreaks (3%)
- Disease is seasonal, with cases peaking in December and January

CAUSATIVE BACTERIA

- Meningococci are carried only by humans in the nasopharynx – their only reservoir
 - Overall 5%-10% of the population carries the bacteria
 - Adolescents and young adults have the highest carriage rates
 - Few carriers develop the disease
- Transmission occurs when close, face-to-face contact permits the exchange of salivary secretions from people who are ill or are carriers
- Worldwide, the vast majority of disease is caused by 5 serogroups (A, B, C, Y, W-135) of the bacterium
- In the United States, almost all cases are caused by serogroups B, C, and Y; there is currently no licensed vaccine that protects against serogroup B in the U.S.

THE VACCINE: MENINGOCOCCAL CONJUGATE VACCINE (MCV4)

- Licensed in the United States for persons 2-55 years of age
 - Covers Serogroups A, C, Y and W-135
- If you were immunized against meningitis with Menomune over 5 years ago your immunity to meningococcal meningitis needs to be boosted. Therefore you should be revaccinated with Menactra or Menveo (MCV4 vaccines)
- Included in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program
- Covered under the preventative services portion of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Adapted from Center for Disease Control Website (August 26, 2009). For more information visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/vac-mening/default.htm#vacc