

Serogroup B Meningococcal (MenB) Vaccines

Information for Parents



What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is a rare, but extremely dangerous illness caused by certain bacteria (*Neisseria meningitidis*). About 1 in 10 people have these bacteria in their noses or throats but are not ill. These people can spread the bacteria to others during close or lengthy contact, especially if living in the same household. Coughing, sneezing, kissing, and sharing drinks are all ways the bacteria can be spread.

Those who become sick suffer from blood poisoning or meningitis, which is inflammation and swelling around the brain and spinal cord. Even when treated, meningococcal disease kills 1 out of 10 cases. Of those who survive, up to 1 in 5 will suffer long-term disabilities such as hearing loss, brain damage, loss of arms or legs, or severe scarring of the skin.

Are there different types of meningococcal disease?

There are at least 12 types, called serogroups, of *N. meningitidis*. Serogroups B, C, and Y cause most of the infections in the United States. Serogroups A and W are more common in other parts of the world.

Who is at risk of becoming ill with meningococcal disease?

Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but certain people are at increased risk, including:

- Infants younger than 1 year old
- Adolescents and young adults 16-23 years old
- People with certain medical conditions that affect the immune system
- People at risk because of an outbreak of meningococcal disease in their community.

Which vaccines prevent meningococcal disease?

Two serogroup B meningococcal (MenB) vaccines are licensed by the Food and Drug Administration:

- Bexsero® is given as 2 doses, at least 1 month apart.
- Trumenba® is currently recommended as 2 or 3 doses based on the person's risk of meningococcal disease, with a final dose at least 6 months after the first.

In addition, 2 licensed serogroup A, C, W, and Y (MenACWY or MCV4) vaccines are routinely given to teenagers in the United States. They are Menactra® and Menveo®.

The MenB Vaccine Information Statement also has answers to many common questions. It is available at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/mening-serogroup.html.

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Who should receive MenB vaccine?

MenB vaccine should be given to people 10 years or older who are at increased risk for serogroup B meningococcal infections, including anyone:

- At risk during an outbreak of serogroup B meningococcal disease
- Whose spleen is damaged or has been removed (functional or anatomic asplenia), including those with sickle cell disease
- With persistent complement component deficiency, a rare immune system condition.
- Taking a drug called eculizumab (also called Soliris®).

MenB vaccine may also be given to anyone 16 through 23 years old to provide short-term protection against most strains of MenB disease; 16 through 18 years are the preferred ages for vaccination.

How common is serogroup B meningococcal disease among persons 16 through 23 years?

The risk of meningococcal disease increases during late adolescence and early adulthood, but is still low overall. From 2006-2015, 88 Californians who were 16-23 years of age were reported to have serogroup B meningococcal disease, and 6 died. Because the serogroup is not always known, actual numbers may be higher than reported.

Why aren't MenB vaccines routinely recommended for all adolescents, in contrast to MenACWY (MCV4) vaccines?

Because meningococcal disease is uncommon in the United States, before making broader recommendations for MenB vaccines, the Federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) wants additional information about:

- How many MenB illnesses in the United States can be prevented by MenB vaccines
- How long people are protected from MenB disease following vaccination
- Confirmation of the safety of MenB vaccines.

How can I learn more about MenB vaccine and whether it is right for my child?

Contact your child's medical provider. You can also find additional information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/index.html.

