

Meningococcal Disease Information

*****Note – If you received this vaccine earlier, you may now need a booster –see below.**

In 2011, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) issued new recommendations for the meningitis vaccination schedule.

2011 Recommendations:

1. The initial vaccine should be given at 11-12 years of age with a booster dose given at 16 years of age.
2. If the initial vaccine is given at 13-15 years of age, a booster dose should be given at 16-18 years of age.
3. If the initial vaccine is given at 16 years of age or older, no booster dose is required.

College Students at Special Risk - Adolescents 11-18 years of age and other populations at increased risk, including college students living in residence halls/similar housing, etc., should receive the vaccine. Non-freshman college students who wish to decrease their risk of meningococcal disease may also choose to be vaccinated.

Facts about Meningitis -Meningococcal disease is a rare, but dangerous bacterial infection that causes meningitis and blood poisoning. In the U.S., ten-year data (1998-2007) show an average incidence of 1,500 cases per year. Adolescents and young adults are at increased risk for the disease. About 11 percent of people of any age who are infected will die, even with appropriate treatment. Among adolescents and young adults, the case fatality rate is 10 to 14 percent. Of those who survive, up to 19 percent will endure permanent disability including limb loss, hearing loss and brain damage. The majority of cases among adolescents are vaccine preventable.

How Meningitis is Spread - Meningococcal disease is transmitted through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions, and close, personal contact.

Be Alert: Early Flu-Like Symptoms - Symptoms can be mistaken for the flu and may include fever, headache, stiff neck, vomiting, sensitivity to light, confusion and rash. Meningococcal disease can progress very rapidly and can kill an otherwise healthy young person in 48 hours or less.

Consider Vaccination - Vaccination is the best method of prevention against meningococcal disease. Immunization can prevent up to 80 percent of meningococcal meningitis cases in adolescents and young adults. The vaccine is safe and effective against four of the five types of the bacteria responsible for meningococcal meningitis. There are risks associated with all vaccines. The meningococcal vaccine can cause pain, redness, and swelling at the injection site; headache; fatigue; and malaise.

For more information about meningococcal disease and immunization, visit the following web sites:

www.cdc.gov/meningitis

www.voicesofmeningitis.com

www.nmaus.org