IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

# Meningococcal Group B Vaccine

## What is meningococcal group B (Men-B) disease?

- Meningococcal group B disease is caused by a bacteria (*Neisseria meningitidis*) known as meningococcus.
- Many people carry the bacteria at the back of their throat or nose without feeling sick or having symptoms.
- These bacteria sometimes overcome the body's natural defences and cause serious illnesses, including meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain) and meningococcemia (a widespread infection involving the blood and multiple organs). If either of these conditions occurs, this is called Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD), which is life-threatening.
- Group B is one of several strains of these bacteria that cause meningococcal disease.
- Some people who get meningococcal group B disease can suffer from kidney damage, amputations or hearing loss.
- It is preventable through immunization.

## What is the meningococcal group B vaccine?

- Meningococcal group B vaccine can help prevent illness caused by the group B strain of meningococcus.
- It does not protect against other strains of this bacteria, or other organisms that cause meningitis or septicemia.
- The vaccine is given by injection. It cannot cause meningococcal disease because it contains no live bacteria.
- People need two doses of the meningococcal group B vaccine to be fully protected. The second dose is given at least four weeks after the first dose.

## Who should receive the meningococcal group B vaccine?

- People who may be exposed to the meningococcus bacteria, and people who are at high risk of getting meningococcal disease, should consider getting this vaccine.
- Meningococcal group B vaccine is not part of the Nova Scotia Routine Immunization Schedules for Children, Youth & Adults. However, it should be considered for people under 26 years of age who, for the first time, are:
  - » Living, or are going to be living, in group settings such as residence/dormitories or long-term youth shelters
  - » Nova Scotian military recruits who will be living in barracks
  - » Living in settings with shared spaces such as sleeping areas, bathrooms, and kitchens.

## Who should NOT receive the meningococcal group B vaccine?

- People who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose or any component of the meningococcal group B vaccine.
- People who are sick or have a fever (temperature of 38.5°C/101.3°F or greater).

***Please read other side.***

**www.nshealth.ca/immunizations**

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IMMUNIZATION AFTERCARE

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***People should stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization to monitor possible reaction. As with any immunization there is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.***

## What are the possible side effects of the meningococcal group B vaccine?

As with any other vaccine, the most common side effects are soreness, redness or swelling at the injection site, tiredness, and fever.

***As fever may occur, make sure you have acetaminophen or ibuprofen at home. Follow the instructions that come with the product. Talk to your healthcare provider before using either of these medications as they are not recommended for people with certain medical conditions.***

### Call your healthcare provider if:

- A fever lasts longer than 24 hours.
- A fever is 38.5°C (101.3°F) or higher.
- A fever doesn't come down after acetaminophen or ibuprofen are taken.
- Other illness or symptoms occur.

## Questions?

If you have any questions about meningococcal group B disease or the meningococcal group B vaccine, please call your local Public Health office (see list of offices here: www.nshealth.ca/public-health) or your healthcare provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the following websites:

**Nova Scotia Health Public Health**
www.nshealth.ca/immunizations

**Immunize Canada**
immunize.ca

**Public Health Agency of Canada**
www.canada.ca/public-health

**811**
811.novascotia.ca

**www.nshealth.ca/immunizations**

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