

# Important Information about **Meningococcal Group C Disease** and Meningococcal Group C Conjugate Vaccine

## PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY

### What is Meningococcal Group C disease?

- Meningococcal group C 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 being sick.
- This bacteria sometimes overcomes the body's natural defences and causes serious illnesses, including meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain) and meningococemia (a widespread infection involving the blood and multiple organs).
- Group C is one of several strains of these bacteria that cause meningococcal disease.
- It can be a life-threatening disease.
- Some children can become deaf or suffer from kidney damage, amputations, or hearing loss.
- It is preventable through immunization.

### What is Meningococcal Group C Conjugate Vaccine?

- Meningococcal group C conjugate vaccine is intended for the prevention of illness caused by the group C strain of meningococcus.
- It provides protection only against disease caused by the group C strain.
- 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.

### Who Should Receive the Meningococcal Group C Conjugate Vaccine?

The Nova Scotia schedule recommends that this vaccine be given to:

- babies 12 months of age (born on or after January 1, 2004)
- teens aged 14–16 years (school immunization program)

### CAUTION

*Some people should check with a health care provider before they receive this vaccine:*

- pregnant women
- people whose immune systems are weak
- people who have thrombocytopenia or other bleeding disorders

### Who Should NOT Receive the Meningococcal Group C Conjugate Vaccine?

- people who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of Meningococcal Group C Conjugate vaccine

*Please read other side.*

# What to Expect Following Immunization with **Meningococcal Group C Conjugate Vaccine**

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Your child has received the meningococcal group C conjugate vaccine. This vaccine is important in protecting your baby, child, or teen from meningococcal group C disease.

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

### What Are the Possible Side Effects from the Vaccine?

Many children have no side effects from the vaccine.

- A common side effect is redness or swelling around the site of the injection.
- Fever and irritability have been reported in younger children. Fever, approximately 4–6 hours after the injection, but lasting no longer than 24 hours, may occur if acetaminophen or ibuprofen is not given.
- Adolescents may experience a headache and tiredness.

**As fever may occur, make sure you have acetaminophen or ibuprofen at home. Follow the instructions that come with the product. These medications should not be taken if you have certain medical conditions. Talk to your health care provider about your medical history before using either of these medications.**

### Fever Management

A fever is not necessarily bad, but it may make your child uncomfortable.

If you think your child has a fever

- Take your child's temperature.
- If the temperature is over 38.5°C (101°F) you may give your child an antipyretic medicine that will help control the fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- You may wish to ask your health care provider which form of medicine is best for your child and how much to give.
- Give the correct dose for your child's weight every 4 to 6 hours and NOT more often.
- Encourage your child to drink extra fluids, such as water.

### NOTE:

Acetaminophen and ibuprofen come in 3 forms for young children:

- drops—which MUST be given with the dropper provided with the brand of medicine
- liquid—given using a teaspoon or a 5-mL measure
- chewable tablet—which can be given to children old enough to chew and swallow food when asked

### Call Your Health Care Provider If

- The fever lasts longer than 24 hours.
- Your child has a temperature of 39.5°C (103°F) or greater.
- The fever does not come down after acetaminophen or ibuprofen is given.
- Your child appears ill with other symptoms.

### Questions?

If you have any questions regarding meningococcal group C disease or meningococcal group C conjugate vaccine, please call your local Public Health Services office or your health care provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the websites of

- the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness at [www.immunize.cpha.ca](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca)
- the Public Health Agency of Canada at [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)
- the Canadian Pediatric Society at [www.cps.ca](http://www.cps.ca)