

## **Meningococcal Disease and Prevention**

Meningococcal disease spreads by direct contact with infected persons by coughing, kissing, or sharing anything by mouth, such as water bottles, eating utensils, lipsticks, or toothbrushes. It can cause pneumonia, bloodstream

infection, and meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord). Severe disease can cause brain damage, loss of hearing or limbs, and death. Fortunately, this life-threatening infection is rare—usually only about 30-60 cases are reported each year in Washington, including 1 to 8 deaths. Adolescents and young adults are more likely to get meningococcal disease, especially if they live in group settings, like college dorms.

MCV4 is the vaccine that protects your child against the most common types of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease. This vaccine and many others are available at no cost to patients younger than 19 years of age in Washington state. Some health care providers may charge an administration fee.

Healthy teens should get one dose of MCV4 during a pre-teen health check up at age 11–12 years. Teens who did not get their first dose during the pre-teen health visit should get a dose at the earliest opportunity. A second dose, often called a booster dose, is now recommended. Teens should get it at age 16 through 18 years or anytime before college. Teens don't need a booster dose if they got the first dose on or after the 16th birthday. Teens aged 11–18 year

with high risk conditions like HIV, absent or defective spleens, and complement component deficiency may need more doses of this vaccine. Ask your healthcare provider how many doses your adolescent needs for full protection.

Learn more about meningococcal disease and how to prevent it on these websites:



### **Washington State Department of Health Immunization Program**

#### ***Meningococcal information:***

[www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/Vaccines/MeningococcalVaccine.aspx](http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/Vaccines/MeningococcalVaccine.aspx)

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### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

#### ***Meningococcal vaccine information:***

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-mening.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-mening.pdf)

#### ***Disease information:***

[www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/index.html)

#### ***Pre-teen and teen immunizations:***

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/preteens-adol.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/preteens-adol.htm)

#### ***College students and young adults:***

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/college.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/college.htm)

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### **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Vaccine Education Center**

#### ***Meningococcus questions and answers:***

[www.chop.edu/export/download/pdfs/articles/vaccine-education-center/meningococcus.pdf](http://www.chop.edu/export/download/pdfs/articles/vaccine-education-center/meningococcus.pdf)

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