

# How can I help protect my child against meningitis?

## Is meningitis life-threatening?

It can be. Meningococcal meningitis is a rare but serious disease caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*.

It can lead to an infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord or to septicemia, which is an infection of the blood. Meningitis can strike without warning and progress quickly.

## Did you know there are different groups of meningitis?

There are 5 vaccine-preventable groups of meningitis that cause most of the disease in the U.S. These groups are called A, C, W, Y, and B. Three groups — B, C, and Y — cause most of the illness in people over the age of 11 in the United States. Each of these groups is responsible for about a third of all cases.

# meningitis.com

## Who is at risk for meningitis?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), certain people are at increased risk for meningococcal disease. Some risk factors include:

### Age

While older adults are at risk, infants, adolescents, and 16-23 year-olds have the highest rates of meningococcal disease in the United States.

### Living conditions

Meningococcal disease can spread when people have or live in close contact with each other in places such as schools, college dormitories, or military barracks.

### Certain medical conditions

There are certain medical conditions that put people at increased risk of meningococcal disease, such as not having a spleen or having problems with their immune system.

Long-term disabilities can include:



Loss of limbs



Brain damage



Hearing Loss

## Is it true that meningitis can be fatal, sometimes within 24 hours?

Potentially. Symptoms such as fever, headache, and neck stiffness can progress rapidly and can become serious and possibly fatal. 10% to 15% of people infected with meningococcal disease will die, sometimes within 24 hours. 11% to 19% of survivors can experience long-term effects such as brain damage, hearing loss, loss of limbs, and seizures.

## Are there separate vaccinations that help protect against meningitis?

Yes. There are vaccinations that help protect against Meningococcal Groups ACWY disease, or Meningitis ACWY disease, and Meningococcal Group B disease, or Meningitis B disease. The CDC recommends Meningitis ACWY vaccination for all adolescents 11-12 years of age, with a booster at age 16 (before the period of increased risk), to help protect against Meningitis ACWY disease.

The CDC says that Meningitis B vaccination may be administered to young adults 16-23 years old, preferably 16-18 years old, to help protect against Meningitis B. The CDC also recommends Meningitis B vaccination for persons 10 years and older in certain groups who are at increased risk for Meningitis B disease.

## How is meningitis bacteria spread?

*Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria can spread easily through coughing, sneezing, or living in close contact with others, in places such as schools, college dormitories, or military barracks.



Kissing



Coughing & Sneezing



Close Quarters

There are two different vaccines to help protect against the 5 vaccine-preventable meningitis groups.

Ask your child's healthcare professional about Meningitis ACWY vaccination and Meningitis B vaccination.

For more information, visit [www.meningitis.com](http://www.meningitis.com).