

# Meningococcal Conjugate-ACYW-135 (Men-C-ACYW) Vaccine

## What is Meningococcal ACYW-135?

Meningococcal bacteria are common. They live in the back of the nose and throat in about one in five people. Usually, the bacteria do not make people sick. However, sometimes the bacteria can cause serious illness.

The Men-C-ACYW vaccine helps protect against disease caused by four types of this bacteria.

## How do meningococcal infections spread?

The bacteria spreads through close contact with saliva, usually through coughing, sneezing, kissing, or sharing things such as food, drink, water bottles, musical instrument mouthpieces, lip-gloss or other items that have been in the mouth of a person who has the disease.

## What are the symptoms of the disease?

The earliest signs are fever, tiredness and/or decreased consciousness. Other signs may include severe headache, vomiting, stiff neck and pain when moving the head and neck. In many cases, red spots on the skin appear which do not disappear when pressed.

Symptoms can become serious and life-threatening very quickly, sometimes within hours.

## Why should my student get this vaccine?

1. Effective: The vaccine works very well when given just before or early in the teenage years.

2. Age appropriate: The teenage years are times when young people are more likely to try activities that increase the risk of infection. This is why it is important that youth get the vaccine before this stage.
3. Schools: The law says that students in grades 7-12 are required to have this vaccine to go to school. Many colleges and universities need proof of having this vaccine as well.
4. Travel: This vaccine is recommended for travel to some countries.

**Note:** This vaccine is different from the meningococcal-C vaccine given at one year of age.

## Who should not get this vaccine at school?

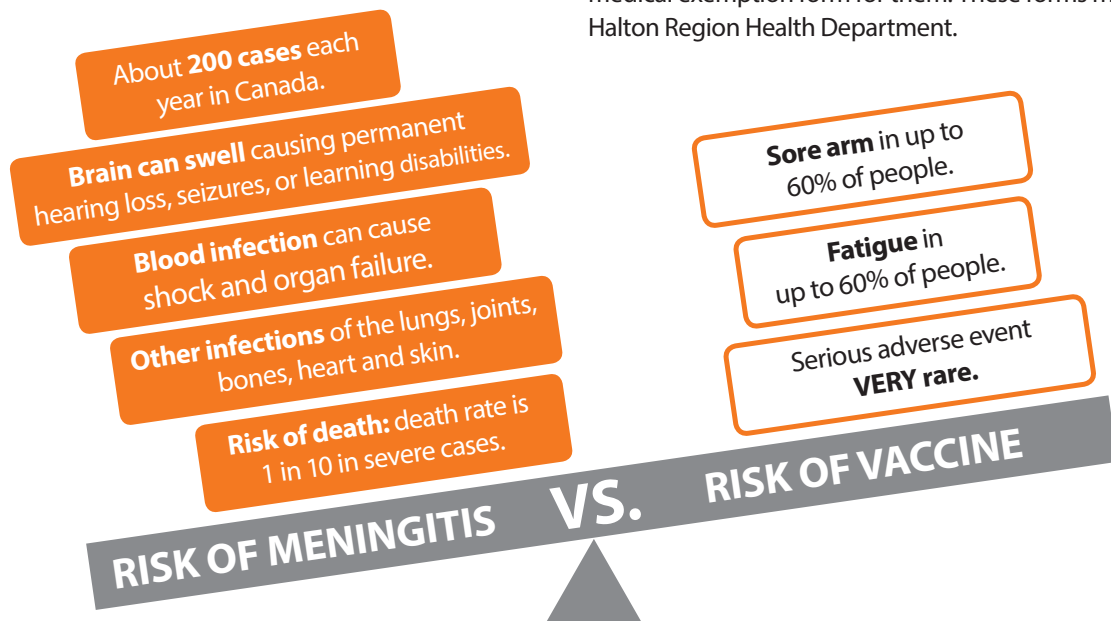
- Students with a history of a bad reaction after getting a vaccine.
- Students with an allergy to tetanus or diphtheria toxoid.

These students should see their doctor for possible vaccination.

## What if I decide not to get the vaccine?

**This vaccine is required by law.** Students who are not vaccinated can be suspended from school. Your student could be at risk of getting meningitis if you decide not to vaccinate.

Parents who choose not to vaccinate for personal choice must complete an exemption form. An exemption form is a legal statement. This form must be notarized. There are some students who cannot get a vaccine for medical reasons. A doctor can fill out a medical exemption form for them. These forms must be brought to Halton Region Health Department.



## How can I prepare my student for vaccination?



Talk to your student about the vaccine.



Complete and return the consent form.



Review helpful ways to deal with fear or anxiety (count to ten, look away from needle, focus on breathing).



Make sure your student eats on clinic day.



Make sure your student wears a short sleeve shirt on clinic day.

Visit our website for more information

[halton.ca/immunize](http://halton.ca/immunize)

### Learn more about:

- Men-C-ACYW
- Vaccines
- Safety
- Side effects
- Ingredients
- Importance of vaccinations to protect your family

**If you have further questions, ask your family doctor or dial 311.**