



## Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine

### What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection that can cause:

- meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord)
- pneumonia (a lung infection)
- septicemia (a serious blood infection)
- coma or death in severe cases

### Why should I be worried about meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease most often occurs in young children and teenagers. Meningococcal disease is spread through droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person. It can be spread by coughing, sneezing, and sharing items (such as food, water bottles, and lipstick). Long-term effects can include hearing loss, loss of limbs, and brain damage. 1 in 10 cases of severe meningococcal disease results in death.

### How can I protect myself from meningococcal disease?

As a younger child, you likely received a meningococcal C immunization. This meningococcal-C-ACYW135 immunization boosts that immunity and protects against three other bacterial strains of meningococcal disease. These types cause the majority of cases of meningitis. The immunization is 80-85% effective. Students become eligible in Gr 7 and can get the vaccine (publicly funded) till they finish high school. If they want it after that they have to pay for it.

### What if I choose not to get protected against meningococcal disease?

You are at risk of getting meningitis if you choose not to receive the immunization.

### How safe is the immunization?

The meningococcal-C-ACYW135 immunization is safe. It has been approved by Health Canada and recommended for use by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization. Before obtaining approval for use in Canada, the immunization went through rigorous testing and evaluation. It is not possible to become infected with meningococcal disease from the immunization.

### What are the side effects of the immunization?

This immunization has side effects similar to all other injections, such as redness, tenderness, and swelling at the injection site. Less commonly, dizziness, nausea, headache, and fever may occur. Severe allergic reactions are extremely rare. Nurses give the immunizations and monitor students for any reactions.

### How can I get ready for the clinic?



Talk about the vaccine with your parents.



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).



Eat a healthy breakfast and lunch.



Wear short sleeves or a loose fitting top.

Public Health will be in the schools several times per school year. If you missed the vaccine, you can get it at the next school clinic.

\*Meningococcal-C-ACYW135 immunization is required by Law for school attendance.\*

A Parent's Story:

My name is Mary Clough and I live in Muskoka, Ontario. Our family lost our eldest daughter MacKenzie Carey Clough to meningitis on February 26, 2005. She was attending Sir Sanford Fleming College in Peterborough, Ontario. Macey (MacKenzie) called home early in the morning on February 25/05 and asked if we could pick her up from school because she wasn't feeling well enough to drive herself home. She said she had the chills late Thursday night and threw up a few times.

My husband and I drove down to get Macey and arrived at the school around 11:30am. Macey was looking pale just like she had the flu. I drove Macey in her car back to Bracebridge while she slept in the passenger seat. When we arrived in Bracebridge around 2:30pm I asked Macey if she was able to drive herself home. Macey drove to our home which is about 30 minutes away and went to bed. Cassey our youngest daughter arrived home from school at 3:45pm and checked on Macey and asked if she needed anything. She said "No" and went back to sleep. When my husband got home he checked on her around 5:00pm to see if she needed anything and asked if her neck hurt. She said she didn't need anything but that her neck did hurt a little.

I arrived home around 6:00 pm and unpacked the car of groceries and then checked on Macey. She was asleep and I woke her up because she had thrown up on the carpet and I asked her if she needed a drink and a bucket. She looked dazed like she had no idea what I was talking about. I knew something was wrong so I called "911." They got here around 6:45pm and took our girl to the South Muskoka Memorial Hospital. They worked on her with everything they could trying to establish her enough to go down to St. Michael's in Toronto.

The ambulance left Bracebridge around 12:30am and got Macey to St. Michael's as soon as they could. We then headed for St. Mike's at 1:30am. When we arrived at St. Mike's Hospital we were escorted upstairs where Dr Hemens told us that our daughter Macey didn't make it. He told us that they did all they could.

I just needed to tell you what happened to our girl. Macey was 19 years old! No one had mentioned to us that she should have a meningitis shot before going off to college. I think the shot should be offered to all students...

I hope my story will help (...) convince everyone to have the meningitis shot.

Sincerely,

Mary Clough

(Story taken from: <https://www.meningitis.ca/resources-support/memorial-stories?search=&page=1>)

<b>Meningococcal immunization contents:</b>	<b>Where else are they found?</b>
Diphtheria toxoid	Other childhood immunizations
Sodium chloride	Naturally found in human body; table salt
Sodium phosphate	Laxatives



For any questions, contact the Grey Bruce Public Health:  
519-376-9420, press '2' or 1-800-263-3456, press '2'  
[www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca](http://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca)

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