

Immunise against meningococcal disease

Protects you when
living closely with others



immunise

your best protection

Young people living closely together in places like boarding school hostels or tertiary education halls of residence need to be immunised to protect against meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal disease can be life-threatening. Vaccines are available to protect against it.



What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is an infection caused by bacteria. It can lead to two very serious illnesses:

- meningitis (an infection of the brain membranes)
- septicaemia (blood poisoning).

There are several different types of meningococcal bacteria, including A, C, W, Y and B. In New Zealand, most meningococcal disease is caused by group B, then group W.

Bacteria are spread in a similar way to the common cold – by coughing and sneezing, or from contact with saliva (spit).

How serious is it?

Meningococcal disease can be life-threatening. It can develop and become deadly in just a few hours.

People who survive meningococcal disease often have serious long-term effects, including amputation of limbs, hearing loss, seizures, brain injury and permanent skin scarring.



Who is most at risk?

Meningococcal disease can affect anyone. However, young babies, teenagers and young adults are most at risk.

Teenagers and young adults **living closely with others**, such as in boarding schools or tertiary education halls of residence, are at high risk.



How can I be protected?

Vaccination protects against the disease and helps stop it spreading in our communities. There are vaccines available in New Zealand that protect against strains A, C, W and Y, and strain B of meningococcal disease.

One dose of vaccine protects against A, C, W and Y strains. It's **FREE** if you're aged between 13 and 25 years and:

- entering or in your **first year** of living in a boarding school hostel, tertiary education hall of residence, military barracks or prison
- already living in a boarding school hostel, tertiary education hall of residence, military barracks or prison (free until 30 November 2020).

There is also a vaccine available that protects against meningococcal B. **It's not free**, but highly recommended if you live in a place outlined above.

Meningococcal vaccines help protect you for up to five years. Get immunised if your last one was more than five years ago.

Key Points

1. A serious bacterial infection that can become deadly in just a few hours.
2. Teenagers and young adults living closely together are at higher risk.
3. One dose of vaccine protects against four out of five strains of meningococcal disease. It's **FREE** for 13 to 25 year-olds living in boarding school hostels, tertiary education halls of residence, military barracks or prisons.
4. A vaccine is available to protect against meningococcal B - it's **not free, but is highly recommended** for those living closely together.

For more information about getting immunised against meningococcal disease:

- talk to your doctor, nurse or health centre
- phone Healthline's 24-hour service (0800 611 116).

This resource is available from healthed.govt.nz or the Authorised Provider at your DHB. May 2020. **HE2596**



New Zealand Government

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