

# Meningococcal Vaccines for Preteens and Teens



All preteens and teens should get vaccines to protect against meningococcal disease. Talk with your child's doctor or nurse about meningococcal vaccination to help protect your child's health.

## Why does my child need meningococcal vaccines?

Meningococcal vaccines help protect against the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease. Meningococcal disease can refer to any illness caused by a type of bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. Meningococcal disease is not very common in the United States, but teens and young adults are at increased risk.

The two most common types of illnesses include infections of the

- **Lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis)**
- **Bloodstream**

Even with treatment, about 10 to 15 out of 100 people with meningococcal disease will die from it. Meningococcal vaccines are the best way to protect preteens and teens from getting meningococcal disease.



## When should my child be vaccinated?



**Dose 1: Ages 11-12**  
**Dose 2: Age 16**

**All preteens and teens should get 2 doses of the meningococcal conjugate (MenACWY) vaccine.** They should get the first dose at ages 11-12 and a booster dose at 16 years old. If your teen hasn't gotten this meningococcal shot, talk to their doctor or nurse about getting it as soon as possible.

Teens and young adults (16 through 23 years old) may also get a serogroup B meningococcal (MenB) vaccine (2 doses). The preferred age to get MenB vaccine is 16 through 18 years old. Talk with your teen's doctor or nurse about meningococcal vaccination to help protect your child's health.

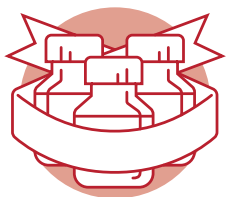
## Are meningococcal vaccines safe for my child?

**Researchers have studied the meningococcal vaccines very carefully and they are shown to be very safe.** Like any vaccine, meningococcal vaccines may cause mild side effects, like redness and soreness where the shot was given (usually in the arm). Note that your child can get both meningococcal vaccines during the same visit, but in different arms.

Some preteens and teens might faint after getting a meningococcal vaccine or any shot. To help avoid fainting and injuries related to fainting, preteens and teens should sit or lie down when they get a shot and then for about 15 minutes after getting the shot. Serious side effects from meningococcal vaccines are rare.

## How can I get help paying for these vaccines?

Most health insurance plans cover routine vaccinations. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program also provides vaccines for children 18 years and younger who are uninsured, underinsured, Medicaid-eligible, American Indian, or Alaska Native. Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/Features/VFCprogram](http://www.cdc.gov/Features/VFCprogram).



Talk to your child's doctor or nurse about meningococcal vaccines, or visit [www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/vaccine-info.html](http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/vaccine-info.html)

