



# Men-C-ACYW-135 VACCINE

MENACTRA®

## For meningococcal disease

### What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by a bacteria known as meningococcus. It is spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions like spit (e.g., by living in close quarters, kissing).

In rare instances, the germ overcomes the body's natural defenses, and causes serious diseases, including bacterial meningitis (an inflammation of the tissue surrounding the brain and spinal cord), and a widespread infection of the blood and other organs.

The symptoms of meningitis include high fever, headache, stiff neck, vomiting and drowsiness.

Other symptoms might include sensitivity to bright light, confusion, and a purplish skin rash. Anyone with these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention.

Meningococcal disease is serious, and sometimes fatal. Approximately 10 percent of people who develop the disease will die.

Even those who recover may have long-term complications. These can include deafness, brain damage, problems with their nervous system and may result in amputation of one or more limbs.

Meningococcal disease is more commonly diagnosed among infants, adolescents and young adults. Those ages 16 through 21 years have the highest rates of meningococcal disease.

Vaccination is the best protection.

### What is the Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine?

The Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine protects against meningococcal disease. It may also be referred to as MENACTRA® which is its brand name.

All 11-12 years olds should be vaccinated.

If your child received the Men-C vaccine at 18 months, MENACTRA® is required as a booster. If your child missed the Men-C vaccine, MENACTRA® will cover them.

The vaccine is required to attend high school.

The vaccine is available through the Grade 7 school vaccine program or through clinics at the Health Unit.

**Note:** The Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) requires students to have one dose of Menactra (Men-C-ACYW-135) to attend school after 12 years of age. If the student is not to be immunized for meningococcal disease either the affidavit process must be followed or a

medical exemption must be filed with the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit.

### What should I do if serious side effects do occur?

You should go to your doctor or the nearest emergency department if any of the following symptoms occur within three days of getting the needle: hives, swelling of the throat or mouth, trouble breathing (hoarseness or wheezing), high fever (over 39°C or 103°F) or convulsions.

### Is it safe?

Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get the disease.

Some common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, redness and swelling in the arm where the vaccine was given. Headache, fatigue, muscle soreness and mild fever might also occur.

For more information, please contact a member of the Vaccine Preventable Disease Team by calling the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit at 519-426-6170 or 905-318-6623.

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