

**MENINGITIS** is a rare but serious infection of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord and is caused by meningococcal disease, a serious bacterial illness. Meningococcal disease is a leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children age 2 through 18 in the United States and may also result in blood infections. Symptoms of meningitis can include fever, stiff neck, eye sensitivity to light, purple-spotted rash, a drop in blood pressure, headache, nausea and vomiting.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but it is most common in infants younger than 12 months of age and people with certain medical conditions, such as a removed spleen. Meningococcal disease is contagious and is commonly spread by close contact, such as coughing, and can be shared by people living in the same household. College freshman who live in dormitories and teenagers ages 15 to 19 have an increased risk of getting meningococcal disease.

#### **WHO SHOULD NOT RECEIVE THE MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINE?**

- Anyone who has ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to a previous dose of meningococcal vaccine or to any vaccine component.
- Anyone who is moderately or severely ill.
- Anyone who has ever had Guillain-Barre Syndrome.
- Pregnant women, unless clearly needed.

#### **WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINE?**

Mild-to-moderate problems: soreness, redness or swelling where the shot was given, fever, muscle aches and drowsiness.

Severe problems (rare): Guillain-Barre syndrome (For those who received MCV4), serious allergic reactions with symptoms including: difficulty breathing, wheezing, hives, pale skin, fast heartbeat, and dizziness.

#### **REFERENCES**

Hamborsky J, Kroger A, Wolfe S, eds. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases*. 13th ed. Washington, DC: Public Health Foundation, 2015.

Vaccine Information Statements:

*Meningococcal ACWY Vaccines (MenACWY and MPSV4)*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). March 31, 2016. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/mening.html>. Accessed April 2016.

*Serogroup B Meningococcal (MenB)*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). August 14, 2016. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/mening-serogroup.html>. Accessed April 2016.