



What is Meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by a bacterium commonly known as meningococcus. **There are 13 known types of this bacteria, but only 6 (types A, B, C, W₁₃₅, X & Y) commonly cause meningococcal disease worldwide.** Meningococcal disease can cause meningitis (inflammation around the brain) and septicaemia (infection of the blood), or a combination of both. Infants and adolescents are most vulnerable to meningococcal disease.



In Australia, the three most common types that cause meningococcal disease are **B, W₁₃₅ and Y, with B accounting for 72.5%** of meningococcal disease in children less than 4 years old¹. Although meningococcal disease is not common, it is very serious as it can develop quickly, and can cause severe illness and death.



Meningococcal C vaccination is recommended as part of routine childhood immunisation. It is provided free to children at 12 months of age as part of the National Immunisation Program (NIP). Meningococcal C vaccination may also be considered for close household contacts of someone infected with type C meningococcal disease.

Some States and Territories have recently announced meningococcal-ACWY vaccination programs for adolescents. Refer to your State or Territory Health Department for more details.

Routine vaccination against meningococcal types A, B, W₁₃₅ or Y is not provided free on the NIP, however some individuals, including travellers to certain parts of the world at certain times, may be at risk and vaccination may be recommended.

Please speak to your doctor regarding your individual circumstances.