

Meningococcal Disease – vaccines now available!

Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection of the blood (septicaemia) and/or the coverings of the spinal cord and blood (meningitis).

It can progress very quickly to a life threatening illness. In the early stages symptoms can be non specific and difficult to recognize. They include fever, headaches, neck stiffness, vomiting, muscular aches and a spotty red-purple rash. If these symptoms/signs are present, seek immediate medical attention.

How common is Meningococcal Disease in WA?

In 2014 – 18 cases

In 2015 – 15 cases

In 2016 – 23 cases

In 2017 - 45 cases

In 2018 – 41 cases

What are the “Types” of Meningococcal?

There are five main “types” of Meningococcal disease – A, B, C, W, Y

In 2014 there were 13 cases of B, 2 cases of C, 2 W and 1 Y

In 2015 there were 9 cases of B, 4 W and 2 Y

In 2016 there were 6 cases of B, 12 W, 2 Y and 3 other

In 2017 there were 12 cases of B, 21 W, 8 Y and 4 other

In 2018 there were 8 cases of B, 30 cases of W and 3 Y

Age Group – the ages most prone to meningococcal disease are children under 4 years and teenagers and young adults age 15-24.

Is there Prevention?

Current vaccinations are Government funded.

1. Meningococcal C – in normal immunization schedule at 12 months.
2. New WA programme for ACWY for 15 – 19 year olds completed programme in 2017 2018 and 2019 Year 10 only eligible for vaccine
3. As of January 2018 children over 12 months and under 5 years of age receive the Meningococcal ACWY vaccine for free as part of the Government funded program.
4. Children turning 12 months from 1 July 2018 will automatically receive the ACWY vaccine as part of their routine 12 months immunisations.

Vaccines – These are available for Meningococcal B and ACWY. However not all these vaccines are free or on the Schedule and depending at what age you decide to immunise your child will determine how many doses of each vaccine are require.

Please make an appointment with your Doctor to discuss this.

Is There Treatment?

Meningococcal Disease can be treated with antibiotics but it must be treated early! Currently, if infected, 10% will die and 20% will be left with significant long term complications.

For more information, see your GP at Grantham House Medical Practice and go to

<http://www.meningococcal.org.au/>

<http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/>

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