



## **What is meningococcal disease?**

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial infection of the blood or brain. In 2004, 39 cases of meningococcal disease, including 2 deaths, were identified in WA. About 25% of these cases occur in children less than 2 years of age, 15% 2-4 years, 10% 4-9 years, 10% 10-14 years, 20% 15-19 years, 10% 20-24 years, 5% 25-30 years, and 5% more than 30 years of age.

## **What is Group C meningococcal disease?**

Thirty (77%) of the 39 cases of meningococcal disease identified in 2004 were caused by Group B meningococcal bacteria and 6 cases (15%) were caused by Group C meningococcal bacteria. About 30% of Group C cases occur between 1 and 4 years of age (no Group C cases were identified in children less than 1 year of age), 5%: 5-9 years, 5%: 10-14 years, 15%: 15-19 years, 30%: 20-24 years, 5%: 25-29 years, and 10%: 30 or more years of age.

## **Why should my child be vaccinated against Group C meningococcal disease?**

The current Group C meningococcal (MenC) vaccines (Meningitec™, Menjugate™, NeisVac-C™) are highly (>90%) protective and one dose of one of these vaccines after 12 months of age should give long term (possibly life-long) immunity against Group C meningococcal disease. Booster doses are currently not recommended. There are currently no licensed Group B meningococcal vaccines and it is unlikely one will be licensed for several more years.

## **Who is eligible for free Group C meningococcal (MenC) vaccine?**

From 2003 onwards, all children are eligible for one free dose of MenC vaccine when they turn 1 year of age. Also, in 2005, persons born since 1 January 1984 are eligible for one free dose of MenC vaccine from their immunisation provider.

MenC vaccine can also be prescribed by a doctor and given from 6 weeks of age. Three doses (at least 4 weeks apart) of MenC vaccine are required for children 6 weeks to 3 months of age, two doses (at least 4 weeks apart) are required for children 4 months to 11 months of age, and one dose is required for persons 12 months of age or older. MenC vaccines provided to children less than 12 months of age must be prescribed and are not free.

## **Who should not be vaccinated against Group C meningococcal disease?**

People who have had a severe allergic reaction to any of the MenC vaccine components or to a previous dose of that MenC vaccine.

## **What are the side effects from Group C meningococcal disease vaccination?**

Serious side effects following Group C meningococcal disease vaccination are rare. Common (>10%), temporary side effects include soreness at the injection site, fever, irritability, loss of appetite and headaches.

## **Where can I get more information about Group C meningococcal vaccines?**

Ask your GP, local Population Health Unit, community nurse, health worker, the Central Immunisation Clinic (telephone 9321 1312), or use the Internet, e.g.: [www.health.wa.gov.au/meningococcal](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/meningococcal).