

What is the MenACWY vaccine?

The MenACWY vaccine helps to protect against disease caused by four of the main groups of meningococcal bacteria - A, C, W and Y.

Meningococcal group W (MenW) has historically been rare in the UK but since 2009 cases began to increase. A particularly aggressive strain of MenW caused disease in all age groups with a significant increase in university students.

The MenACWY vaccine was introduced across the UK in August 2015 in response to the rise in MenW cases. With the introduction of this vaccine, cases of MenW fell and now remain low. Remember, no vaccine will offer complete protection from meningitis.

Remaining vigilant is vital.

Who is entitled to the MenACWY vaccine?

All teenagers around the age of 14 are offered this vaccine as part of the routine immunisation schedule. The MenACWY vaccine is usually given at school at the same time as the tetanus, diphtheria and polio booster.

Any young person, who has missed this vaccine at school, remains eligible to receive it up to the age of 25yr. This is especially important for new university entrants who have a higher risk of contracting meningococcal disease. Students attending university for the first time should check that their vaccines are up to date. This can be done by contacting their GP surgery, or checking on the NHS app.

The MenACWY vaccine is also recommended for people with certain long-term health conditions who are at greater risk. These include individuals with no spleen, or a spleen that does not work properly or with complement disorders (an immune disorder).

The MenACWY vaccine is used as a travel vaccine for travellers attending the Hajj or Umrah pilgrimages. It is also recommended for those visiting countries with a higher incidence of meningococcal disease, such as parts of Africa and Latin America. Check with your GP or practice nurse for information about travel vaccines.

How many doses are required?

One dose is required.

Can this vaccine cause meningitis?

No, the MenACWY vaccine is not a live vaccine and cannot cause meningitis.

Are there any side-effects?

As with all vaccines, side-effects can occur and are usually short-lived (24 hours). The most common side-effects in teenagers are redness, hardening and itching at the injection site, fever, headache, nausea and fatigue.

Can I get the vaccine privately?

Yes. A variety of pharmacies, travel clinics and private GP practices offer this vaccine for travel purposes and may be able to provide this vaccine for general protection. Prices will vary, so you may wish to contact more than one provider before making your choice. Expect to pay between £50 – 70 privately for this vaccine.

Do you have further questions?

Contact our nurse-led Helpline on 0808 80 10 388 or email helpline@meningitisnow.org

*Most Scottish students will have already been offered the MenACWY. If you live outside Scotland but are attending a university in Scotland, ensure you get the MenACWY vaccine before you go.

Meningitis Now is here to help you.

We are saving lives and rebuilding futures through awareness, research and support.

If you have any questions or are interested in finding out how we can help, please get in touch.

Nurse-led Helpline: 0808 80 10 388 (UK)

Email: helpline@meningitisnow.org



Meningitis Now

Fern House • Bath Road
Stroud • Gloucestershire • GL5 3TJ
Tel: 01453 768 000
info@meningitisnow.org

References for the content of this fact sheet are available on our website:
<https://www.meningitisnow.org/who-we-are/policies/references-and-evidence/>