



QUESTIONS

# Q & A

FOR PARENTS ANSWERS

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## MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINES

### What is Meningococcal disease ?

- ✦ Meningococcal infections can cause meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and infections of the blood. It is a devastating illness, which progresses very rapidly. Unless diagnosed and treated on time, the illness can lead to death, and disability in some survivors
- ✦ In India, the disease usually involves young children.
- ✦ Four types of meningococci cause disease, A, C, Y W-135, of which the Type A is most common in India. It is a devastating illness, which progresses very rapidly.
- ✦ Meningococcal infections have a low incidence in India, except for periodic outbreaks, described in North India.

### What are the types of Meningococcal vaccines available in India?

There are 2 kinds of vaccine available in India.

- Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4): contains A, C, Y W-135
- Meningococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (MPSV4)

When indicated, the Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4) is preferred.

### How safe is this vaccine?

Meningococcal vaccines are quite safe. Mild problems like pain, redness at the injection site and mild fever do occur amongst few patients. Severe allergic reactions are very rare.

### Who should receive this vaccine and what is the schedule?

- ✦ In India, the vaccine is recommended only for children with certain medical conditions that affect the immune system, making it weak in tackling certain infections e.g. children with HIV, absent or non-functioning spleen, deficiency of certain proteins required for proper functioning of the immune system and children on drugs that suppress the immune system.
- ✦ People working in laboratories and exposed to samples containing meningococci.
- ✦ Children and adults traveling to certain parts of Africa also need to take this vaccine.
- ✦ Young adults traveling to USA for further studies and pilgrims undertaking the Hajj pilgrimage, may also need this vaccine.

Since these vaccines are not used routinely, your doctor will advise you about this vaccine and the schedule to be followed, for your child.

### Who should not receive this vaccine?

A person who has ever had a severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) after a previous dose or a person who has a severe allergy to any vaccine component

**For more information, please contact your doctor.**

