



החברה הישראלית לרפואת ילדים בקהילה (חיפ"א)  
ההסתדרות הרפואית בישראל

ISRAEL AMBULATORY PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATION  
ISRAEL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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## **Meningococcal B Bacteria Vaccination Information Sheet**

Dear parents:

The Ministry of Health and the Israel Pediatric Association recommend vaccinating all infants with a vaccine against meningococcal B bacteria. To better inform parents regarding this vaccine we have created this information sheet. This sheet should not be used in lieu of a conversation with your children's physician, who is the preferable and ideal source for information related to your child's health.

### **What diseases are caused by meningococcal bacteria?**

Neisseria meningitidis (also called meningococcus) is part of the normal bacterial flora of the nose and pharynx, carried by approximately 10% of adults and up to 25% of adolescents. It is transmitted from one person to another via respiratory tract. Typically, it does not cause illness. Rarely, however, it may become virulent, infiltrate the bloodstream and cause sepsis (blood poisoning), called "meningococemia." Via the bloodstream, the bacteria may spread to different body organs, resulting in a variety of complications: endocarditis (inflammation of the inner layer of the heart), pneumonia and respiratory tract inflammation, arthritis, and the most serious of all, meningitis. Without immediate medical intervention, meningitis is usually fatal.

There are 13 known strains of the bacteria, six of which: A, B, C, W135, X, Y cause the majority of meningococcal disease in humans. The most common strain in Israel is the B strain. Studies published in Israel found that every year, between 30 and 70 children under the age of 15 become sick in Israel every year, most of them under the age of 5.

### **Who could get diseases?**

Meningococcal disease can appear at any age. However, significantly high disease rates occur in infants and toddlers up to the age of two years, as well as in people suffering from immune disorders – such as problems in the spleen, the complement system or those with AIDS.

### **For whom is the vaccine recommended?**

The vaccine is generally recommended to all, but especially to children up to the age of five years, and particularly babies up to the age of two years as well as children or adults with specific immune disorders.

### **Which vaccine is recommended?**

Three conjugate vaccines are registered in Israel against the four other types of meningococci (A/C/Y/W135), these vaccines are not recommended as part of routine care and are administered to designated populations (mainly children with specific immune disorders or certain travelers). There are two registered authorized vaccines in Israel for the B strain: a vaccine called Bexsero for infants and toddlers and a vaccine called Trumenba for children aged 10 years and older.

### **How can the vaccine be received?**

The vaccine is not included in the National Health Care Services Program and is not administered in national or municipal Tipat Halav, however it is subsidized by Kupat Holim for supplemental insurance policy holders as a partial payment and is administered in HMO clinics (including Tipat Halav of Kupat Holim). In order to receive the vaccine, please obtain a prescription from your children's physician and a referral for vaccination.

### **Does the vaccine provide complete "coverage" against meningitis?**

There are other bacteria that can cause meningitis, against which babies are routinely vaccinated at Tipat Halav.

### **How efficient is the meningococcal B strain vaccine?**

In countries where the vaccine is administered routinely (9 western countries), a significant reduction was found in bacterial morbidity rates. In the UK, for example, after 10 months of vaccination, a reduction of approximately 50% in the number of cases was shown. The advisory committee to the Ministry of Health in Israel has estimated that inclusion of the vaccine in the routine vaccination program in the State of Israel will prevent approximately 18 disease cases and 1 death every year.

### **How many vaccine doses are required?**

Age group	Initial course	Interval between doses in first course	Booster dose
<b>2-5 months</b> without additional risk factor*	2 doses	Two months	One dose at age 12-15 months. At least 6 months from previous dose**
<b>2-5 months</b> with risk factor additional to age*	3 doses	One month	One dose at age 12-15 months. At least 6 months from previous dose**
<b>6-11 months</b> (not vaccinated previously)	2 doses	Two months	One dose from age 12 months, and at least two months from previous dose**
<b>12-23 months</b> (not vaccinated previously)	2 doses	Two months	One dose 12-23 months from previous dose
2-10 years	2 doses	Two months	No recommendation for booster dose
11 years onwards	2 doses	One month	No recommendation for booster dose

**Note:** guidelines for additional booster doses have not been published yet. \* Do not give the first dose before age 8 weeks. \*\*This dose is recommended before reaching age 24 months

### **How long does the vaccine's protection last?**

The duration of protection is not known for sure, however studies prove reduced morbidity of over 6 years, meaning that the vaccine protects throughout the entire high-risk period.

### **Can the vaccine be given along with other vaccines?**

Due to the high prevalence of fever when administered along with routine vaccines, it is recommended to give this vaccine separately, especially in infants under one year of age.

### **Which side effects are reported after vaccination?**

The most common side effect in infants and toddlers up to the age of two years is temperature higher than 38 degrees, especially when given simultaneously with other routine vaccines. Other common side effects: injection site sensitivity, irritability, reduced appetite, drowsiness and crying. In light of these data, the Ministry of Health has recommended an interval of at least three days between the administration of routine vaccines and administration of this vaccine in infants under one year of age, and to administer Paracetamol (Acamoli, etc.) immediately after vaccination and two additional doses 4-6 hours apart, even without increased temperature.

**Additional information appears in the vaccine brochure and the Ministry of Health website.  
You can also find information on the various HMO websites and on some hospital websites.  
The medical staff will gladly provide further answers regarding any questions.**