

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT GRADE 7 VACCINATIONS

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Public Health provides free vaccinations to Grade 7 students in the schools in the fall and in the spring.

Students in Grade 7 are offered three important vaccines that help to protect them from:

- **Meningococcal disease** (causes meningitis) **required for school attendance*
- **Hepatitis B** (causes liver damage and liver cancer)
- **Human Papillomavirus** (HPV; causes precancerous lesions, oral, genital and anal cancers; and genital warts)

I strongly recommend that you have your child vaccinated against these diseases. These vaccines are safe and effective and greatly reduce the risk of potentially life-threatening diseases when a completed series has been received.

I ask that you:

- Review the vaccine information at wdgpublichealth.ca/immunizeGr7
- Complete the online consent form for your child as soon as possible
wdgpublichealth.ca/gr7consent

If your child has already received one or more of the vaccines listed above, please complete the consent form and indicate the dates of the vaccinations on the form. A public health nurse will only immunize your child if the vaccine is still needed.

Public Health wants school vaccinations to be a positive experience for students. If you have questions regarding this program or require assistance completing the consent form, please contact Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 7006 to speak with a public health nurse.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, MD, CCFP, MPH, FRCPC
Associate Medical Officer of Health

Meningococcal Vaccine

(Men-C-ACYW-135)

Protects against invasive meningococcal disease caused by serogroups A, C, Y, and W-135.

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is an infection caused by the bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis*. There are five common strains that cause serious illness: A, B, C, Y and W-135. These bacteria can cause meningitis, an infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord; and/or sepsis, an infection of the blood which often leads to organ damage.

The bacteria are spread easily through droplets in the air from coughing or sneezing, or through direct contact with an infected person. This includes kissing or sharing items such as food, cutlery, drinks, lip chap or cigarettes/vapes.

Approximately 10 percent of healthy individuals carry the bacteria in their nose or throat without being sick but they are still able spread it to others.

Complications of meningococcal disease can include long term hearing loss, mental impairments and limb amputations. Meningococcal disease kills one out of every 100 people infected.

Why get vaccinated?

Immunization is the best way to protect you and your family against serious diseases. This vaccine is most effective when given before exposure to the disease.

This vaccine protects against four of the most common and severe strains of meningococcal disease - A, C, Y, and W-135. It is 80-85 percent effective.

If your child received Meningococcal Conjugate C (Men-C-C) vaccine as an infant, they should still receive the Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine as it offers protection against additional strains.

Who is eligible to be vaccinated?

The vaccine is routinely offered to Grade 7 students with eligibility remaining until the end of grade 12. This vaccine is given as a single dose.

It is also provided free to children and adults at high risk of meningococcal disease, such as those with certain medical conditions or those who have been in close contact with a case. For more information on eligibility, see Table 3 of the [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule for Ontario](#).

This vaccine is recommended, but not provided free, for those with occupational risks, those living or travelling in a high-risk area for meningococcal disease and for anyone wishing to be protected against meningococcal A, C, Y and W-135 strains.

It is important to note that effectiveness does decrease over time. Booster doses may be recommended every 5 years for those at continued risk.

Who should not get the vaccine?

- Anyone with a severe allergic reaction to any part of the vaccine or its container.
- Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction to this vaccine in the past.
- Anyone with a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold.
- Anyone who has been vaccinated within the past four weeks with another Men-C-C vaccine.

If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) within six weeks of a previous vaccine, please speak to a healthcare provider about getting this vaccine.

What to expect after vaccination?

Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine is safe and well tolerated.

Side effects, if they occur, are usually mild and go away in a few days. Common side effects include redness, swelling and/or pain at the injection site.

Headache, fever, tiredness, dizziness, nausea and muscle aches may also occur, but are less common.

Severe allergic reactions (i.e. anaphylaxis), although rare, are a risk with the administration of any vaccine. It is recommended that you remain in a clinic setting for 15 minutes following immunization as this is the most common timeframe when anaphylaxis will occur.

Stay up to date with your vaccinations

Make sure your healthcare provider updates your personal immunization record (yellow card) after you receive a vaccine. Keep your records in a safe place.

If your child attends licensed child care or school, please notify Public Health when a vaccine is given. You can report the vaccines in one of the following ways:

- **Online:** The Immunization Connect Ontario (ICON) tool available at immunizewdg.ca allows you to report and view your child's immunization record.
- **Email:** vaccine.records@wdgpublichealth.ca
- **Phone:** 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4396
- **Fax:** 1-519-836-2986

For more information visit:

- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health: wdgpublichealth.ca
- Ontario Ministry of Health: www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines
- Immunize Canada: www.immunize.ca
- Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario: www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunization/schedule.aspx

Hepatitis B Vaccine

Protects against the hepatitis B virus.

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a virus that causes serious liver infections and can lead to permanent liver damage, cirrhosis and/or liver cancer. Hepatitis B is the leading cause of liver cancer in Canada.

Hepatitis B is spread through contact with blood and body fluids from an infected individual. It can be spread through sexual activity, needle sharing, using contaminated equipment for tattooing and piercing, and sharing toothbrushes or razor blades. It may also be passed from mother to baby during childbirth.

Why get vaccinated?

Immunization is the best way to protect you and your family against serious diseases. This vaccine is most effective when given before exposure to the disease.

There is no cure for hepatitis B. As well, one out of 10 people who are infected with the virus will carry it for their life. These individuals often do not have symptoms and can spread it to others.

When the vaccine is given in the recommended number of doses, it protects 98 percent of people.

Who is eligible to be vaccinated?

The vaccine is routinely offered to Grade 7 students with eligibility remaining until the end of grade 12. This vaccine is given to students 11 to 15 years of age as a two-dose series, 4-6 months apart. Students 16 years of age and older, starting or completing their vaccine series will need three doses of the vaccine.

Hepatitis B vaccine is also provided free to infants, children and adults at high risk. For more information on eligibility, see Table 3 of the [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule for Ontario](#).

This vaccine is recommended, but not provided free, for those with occupational risks; those living, travelling or having a medical procedure/care in a country with high levels of hepatitis B; and for anyone wanting to decrease their risk of hepatitis B.

Note: Routine boosters are not recommended if a vaccine series has been completed.

Who should not get the vaccine?

- Anyone with a severe allergic reaction to any part of the vaccine or its container.
- Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction to this vaccine in the past.
- Anyone with a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold.
- Anyone who has completed a hepatitis B or combination vaccine series containing hepatitis B (Twinrix®, Infanrix Hexa®).

If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) within six weeks of a previous vaccine, please speak to a healthcare provider about getting this vaccine.

What to expect after vaccination?

Hepatitis B vaccine is safe and well tolerated.

Side effects, if they occur, are usually mild and go away in a few days. Common side effects include redness, swelling and/or pain at the injection site.

Headache, fever, tiredness, dizziness, nausea and muscle aches may also occur, but are less common.

Severe allergic reactions (i.e. anaphylaxis), although rare, are a risk with the administration of any vaccine. It is recommended that you remain in a clinic setting for 15 minutes following immunization as this is the most common timeframe when anaphylaxis will occur.

Stay up to date with your vaccinations

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For more information visit:

- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health: wdgpublichealth.ca
- Ontario Ministry of Health: www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines
- Immunize Canada: www.immunize.ca
- Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario: www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunization/schedule.aspx

Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV-9)

Protects against nine types of HPV - 6, 11, 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52, and 58.

What is HPV?

HPV is a common virus that causes cancer of the cervix, vulvar, vagina, anus, head, neck, penis and can also cause genital warts. It is spread through sexual contact, either intercourse or sexual touching. Without vaccination, most people will get HPV during their lifetime. Most often, an HPV infection will clear on its own. For some people the HPV will not go away, causing HPV-related cancers or genital warts. Most people infected with HPV do not show any signs or symptoms and can pass the virus onto others without even knowing it.

Why get vaccinated?

Immunization is the best way to protect you and your family against serious diseases. This vaccine is most effective when given before exposure to the disease.

With a completed series, HPV-9 vaccine has been proven to prevent the most common types of HPV infection related to:

- Over 90% of cervical cancers
- About 80-90% of anal cancers
- 40% of vaginal and vulvar cancers
- 40-50% of penile cancers
- 25-35% of mouth and throat cancers (oral and oropharyngeal cancers)
- Over 90% of genital warts

Even with HPV vaccination, it is important to be screened for cervical, vulvar, vaginal, anal, penile and certain head and neck cancers. Women should still get routine cervical cancer screening.

Who is eligible to be vaccinated?

The vaccine is routinely offered to grade 7 students with eligibility remaining to the end of grade 12.

It is also recommended for females 9-45, and males 9-26, and those 27 and older with continued risk.

This vaccine is given as a two-dose series, 6 months apart, for 9-14-year olds and is given as a three-dose series, over 6 months (0, 2, 6), for 15 years and older.

People with weakened immune systems should also get three doses including 9-14-year olds.

Who should not get the vaccine?

- Anyone with a severe allergic reaction to any part of the vaccine or its container.
- Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction to this vaccine in the past.
- Anyone with a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold.

If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) within six weeks of a previous vaccine, please speak to a healthcare provider about getting this vaccine.

What to expect after vaccination?

HPV-9 vaccine is safe and well tolerated.

Side effects, if they occur, are usually mild and go away in a few days. Common side effects include redness, swelling and/or pain at the injection site.

Headache, fever, tiredness, dizziness, nausea, and muscle aches may also occur but are less common.

Severe allergic reactions (i.e. anaphylaxis), although rare, are a risk with the administration of any vaccine. It is recommended that you remain in a clinic setting for 15 minutes following immunization as this is the most common timeframe when anaphylaxis will occur.

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