



**Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care
Public Health**

300 Carlton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R3B 3M9

December 11, 2024

RE: Update to guidance on Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD) vaccine/catch-up program for children

Dear Health Care Provider,

Manitoba continues to see high levels of invasive meningococcal disease (IMD). As of December 6, 2024, a total of 30 confirmed cases of IMD have been reported in Manitoba since December 1, 2023. Typically, about six cases are reported annually. Nearly all confirmed cases were caused by serogroup W (28 confirmed) and are primarily affecting children <4 years of age and adults aged 30–55 years.

Effective March 1, 2024, Manitoba updated its recommended meningococcal vaccine for infants at 12 months of age from the Men-C-C vaccine to Men-C-ACYW vaccine and introduced a catch-up program for children born between January 1, 2020, and February 28, 2023. A reminder letter was sent in June 2024 to those who had not yet received their dose of the Men-C-ACYW vaccine. However, uptake of the vaccine among some of the targeted cohorts has remained low. **We are strongly recommending that providers prioritize and promote this vaccine/catchup program.**

Health care providers should offer the meningococcal conjugate quadrivalent vaccine (Men-C-ACYW) to all eligible individuals according to the provincial eligibility criteria for publicly funded vaccines (see below).

Meningococcal Vaccine Programs:

- **Infant meningococcal vaccine program and catch-up initiative**
 - Children born on or after January 1, 2020, are eligible to receive a dose of the Men-C-ACYW vaccine regardless of previous immunization with a Men-C-C vaccine if they are at least 12 months old.
 - Individuals born between January 1, 2008, and December 31, 2019, are eligible to receive a dose of Men-C-ACYW vaccine if they have never received a dose of the Men-C-C vaccine as part of the 12-month program AND they are less than 10 years old.

- **Manitoba's School Immunization Program** offers a dose of Men-C-ACYW vaccine for children in grade 6. Children who miss the school immunization program may seek this dose from another health care provider.
 - Students born on or after January 1, 2008, are eligible to receive a dose of Men-C-ACYW if they are at least 10 years old, regardless of Men-C-C or Men-C-ACYW immunization history.
 - Individuals born between 1995 and 2007 are eligible to receive a dose of Men-C-ACYW vaccine if they have no previous history of receiving Men-C-C vaccine.
- **Individuals with specific high-risk** medical conditions are also eligible to receive a dose of Men-C-ACYW vaccine (see www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/vaccineeligibility.html).

Please check the Frequently Asked Questions document for more information regarding the infant meningococcal vaccine program change and catch-up campaign:
www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/docs/meningococcal-faq.pdf.

Public health continues to closely monitor the situation. Health care providers should maintain a high index of suspicion for IMD and consider beginning early treatment with appropriate antibiotics after obtaining cultures to reduce the severity of illness and prevent fatalities. Case numbers are being updated monthly at
www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/meningococcus.html.

For more information on IMD, please find the protocol at
www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/protocol/mid.pdf

Please, share this information with all relevant colleagues in your facility.

For any immunization questions, please email vaccines@gov.mb.ca.

Sincerely,



Richard Baydack, PhD
Director
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