

## How can I be protected?

Vaccination protects against the disease and helps stop it spreading to others in our communities.

There are vaccines available in New Zealand that protect against strains A, C, W and Y, and strain B of meningococcal disease.

**One dose** of vaccine protects against A, C, W and Y strains. It's **FREE** if you're aged between 13 and 25 and are in your **first year** of living in a boarding school, hostel, hall of residence, military barracks or prison.

There is also a vaccine available that protects against meningococcal B. It's **not free**, but **highly recommended** if you live in a place outlined above.

Meningococcal vaccines help protect you for up to five years. Get immunised if your last meningococcal vaccination was more than five years ago.

## Key Points

1. Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial infection that can become deadly in just a few hours.
2. Teenagers and young adults living closely together are at higher risk.
3. One dose of vaccine protects against four out of five strains of meningococcal disease. **It's FREE** for 13 to 25-year-olds in their first year living in a boarding school, hostel, hall of residence, military barracks or prison.
4. A vaccine is available to protect against meningococcal B - it's **not free**, but is **highly recommended** for those living closely together.

For more information about getting immunised against meningococcal disease:

- talk to your GP, nurse or health centre
- call Healthline on **0800 611 116**
- [www.health.govt.nz/meningococcal](http://www.health.govt.nz/meningococcal)

# Be protected against Meningococcal disease

Vaccination protects you when  
you're living closely with others



Young people living closely together in places like boarding schools, hostels or university halls of residence need to be immunised to be protected against meningococcal disease. **Meningococcal disease can be life-threatening. Vaccines are available to protect against it.**



## What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is an infection caused by bacteria. It can lead to two very serious illnesses:

**Meningitis** – an infection of the brain membranes

**Septicaemia** – blood poisoning.

There are several different types of meningococcal bacteria, including A, C, W, Y and B. In New Zealand, most meningococcal disease is caused by group B, then group W.

Bacteria are spread in a similar way to the common cold – by coughing and sneezing, or from contact with saliva (spit).

## How serious is it?

Meningococcal disease can be life-threatening. It can develop and become deadly in **just a few hours**.

People who survive meningococcal disease often have serious long-term effects, including amputation of limbs, hearing loss, seizures, brain injury and permanent skin scarring.

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become deadly in  
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## Who is most at risk?

Meningococcal disease can affect anyone. However, young babies, teenagers and young adults are most at risk.

**Teenagers and young adults living closely with others, such as in boarding schools or university halls of residence, are at high risk.**

