

# Meningococcus

Meningococcus is one of the most rapid and overwhelming infectious diseases known to man. Most people exposed to meningococcus will not become ill, but for those who do, the disease can quickly become deadly causing a healthy individual to die within hours.

## The Disease

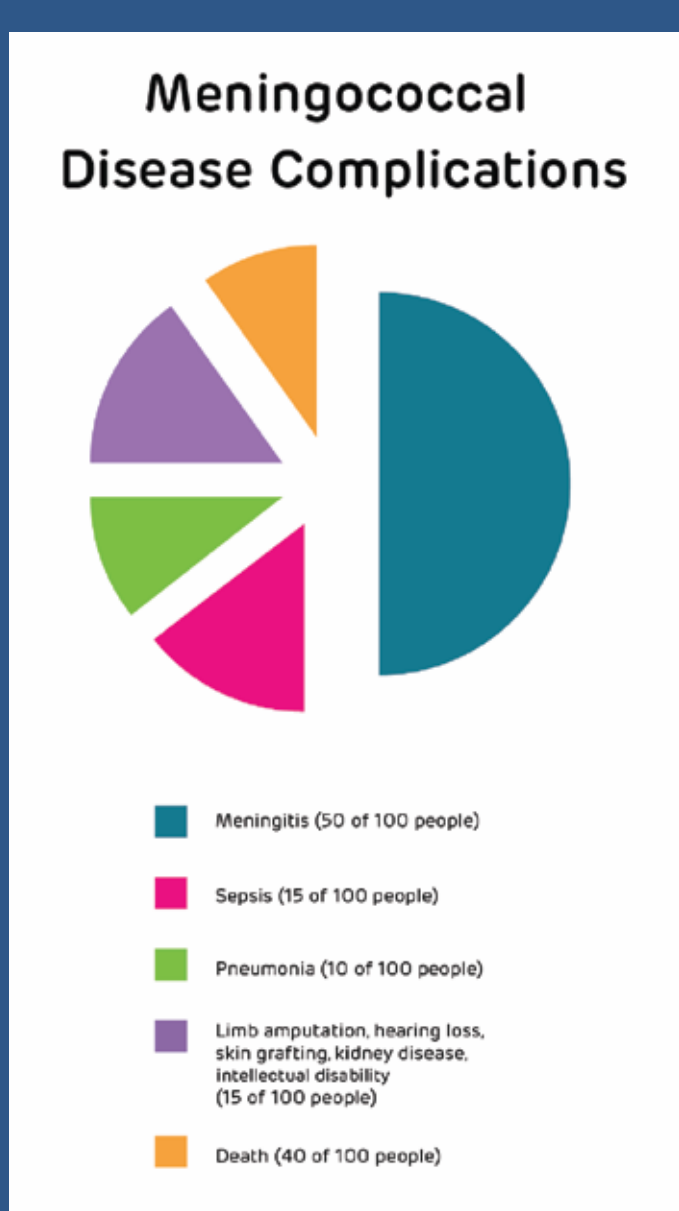
### How It Spreads

Usually, meningococcal infection is acquired after intimate contact with an infected person. Intimate contact includes:

- Kissing
- Sharing food or beverages
- Staying in the same house or room (including a classroom) for more than four hours a day

### Symptoms and Complications

Symptoms vary based on which complications occur.



- Meningitis - swelling of the coverings of the brain and spinal cord
- Sepsis - infection of the blood
- Pneumonia - infection of the lungs
- Limb amputations
- Hearing loss
- Skin loss or damage requiring grafting
- Kidney disease
- Intellectual disabilities
- Death

**About 4 of every 10 people infected with meningococcus will die.**

## The Vaccines

### Meningococcus ACWY

This meningococcal vaccine is similar to those for pneumococcus and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) in that protection against disease occurs when one develops antibodies to the sugar (or polysaccharide) that coats the bacterium.



### Meningococcus B



Although there are only five different types of meningococcus that commonly cause disease (types A, B, C, Y and W-135), it has been very difficult to make a vaccine that includes type B, and meningococcus type B accounts for two-thirds of meningococcal infections in infants and one-third of meningococcal infections in adolescents and adults.

### Who Should Get Vaccinated Against Meningococcal Infections



Meningococcal ACWY vaccine is recommended for all 11- to 12-year-olds with a second dose at 16 years of age. It is also recommended for some people at other ages who are at higher risk for infection.



Meningococcal B vaccine is recommended as a series of 2 or 3 doses at 16 to 18 years of age. It is also recommended for some people at higher risk of infection.

For more information about who is at increased risk for meningococcal infection, check our website:

