



# Meningococcal disease FAQ for Pilbara School Newsletters

## What is meningococcal disease?

- Invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) is a rare but serious disease.
- There are 13 known meningococcal serogroups (types)
- Serogroups A, B, C, W-135 and Y are the most commonly common.
- Currently the Australian public can access vaccines that cover A,B,C,W,Y. At this point not all are available on the free immunisation schedule.

## Who is most at risk from meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease can affect any age group. However, those most at risk of meningococcal disease are children 4 years and under, particularly Aboriginal children, and adolescents aged 15-19 years.

## What are the symptoms of meningococcal disease?

- The symptoms of meningococcal disease can include: fever, headache, neck stiffness, muscle or joint pains, drowsiness, confusion, nausea and vomiting and a rash of red-purple spots or bruises.
- Common symptoms of meningococcal disease in babies include: fever, rapid breathing, rash, vomiting, irritability, drowsiness, and pale skin.
- If you or someone you know develops symptoms or signs consistent with meningococcal disease consult your family doctor or the Emergency Department of the closest hospital immediately.

## Who is eligible the free meningococcal ACWY vaccine?

- All Aboriginal children from 6 weeks to under 5 years
- All children from 12 month to under 5 years
- Year 10 school age
- 15 years to under 20 years

## Where can people access their vaccine?

You can access these vaccinations through your local community health clinic or Aboriginal medical service. If you would like to have your child vaccinated through your local GP, phone first as not all GPs offer childhood immunisation in the Pilbara and a cost may apply.

## **What if my child does not fit into the free schedule?**

The vaccination is only free to people in the target group, however it is possible to have the vaccination privately (cost is typically less than \$100). Please contact your GP to discuss this. It may take a few days for your GP or pharmacy to get the vaccine for you

For additional information [Healthywa.gov.au](http://Healthywa.gov.au)