

Updated December 2022

## **Meningococcal B Vaccine (4CMenB)**

Bexsero®

### **Meningococcal Infection**

Meningococcal disease is very rare, however once infected, the disease can progress quickly and with serious consequences. Many people (10% of the population) carry the bacteria at the back of their throat or nose without feeling sick. In rare instances, the bacteria overcome the body's natural defenses and cause serious diseases, including meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and septicemia (widespread infection involving the blood and multiple organs). Meningococcal disease is fatal in 8-15% of cases and 11 to 19% of survivors will suffer from some form of permanent disability, such as hearing loss, neurological damage or limb loss.

There are many strains of meningococcal infection that can cause illness: A, B, C, Y, W-135. The bacteria is spread through close contact, such as in kissing, sharing water bottles. Children under 5 years of age; teens and seniors are at greater risk of infection.

### **Vaccine Benefits**

Meningococcal B vaccine provides protection against disease caused by the B strain. Routine childhood and teen vaccination schedules do not include the meningococcal B vaccine. Some parents may have purchased this vaccine for their infant. The MenB vaccine provides a strong immune response. Two doses provide better protection than one.

### **Eligibility / Cost**

The vaccine is free for close contacts of a case of meningococcal B infection, and in an outbreak setting. For all other individuals, the vaccine is available through private purchase and can be administered by your healthcare provider.

### **Vaccine Side Effects and Risks**

The vaccine is safe, effective and generally well tolerated. Common side effects include pain and swelling where the vaccine was given, headache, and feeling tired or unwell for a short time after receiving the vaccine. A fever can also occur following vaccination. Treatment with over the counter medications for side effects is effective. Symptoms usually resolve in a few days.

In rare cases, serious allergic reactions such as trouble breathing, rash, swelling in the throat and face may occur. Allergic reactions can be treated and are temporary. Please

stay at the clinic for 15 minutes following vaccination for staff to monitor for reactions. There are no long-term side effects associated with this vaccine.

**Not For the Following Individuals**

Individuals with a history of anaphylaxis after a previous dose of a 4CMenB vaccine and individuals with proven immediate or anaphylactic hypersensitivity to any component of the vaccine or its container should not receive the vaccine.

Precautions should be taken for the following individuals who:

- have a severe infection with a high temperature
- have an allergy to any component of the vaccine, including allergy to the antibiotic kanamycin, latex or alum

**For More Information**

- Talk to your health care provider
- Call Toronto Public Health 416-338-7600