Meningococcal disease is an uncommon, but serious disease caused by the *Neisseria meningitidis* bacterium. These bacteria can be categorized into 5 primary groups: A, C, Y, W, and B. Meningococcal group B disease (MenB) is a form of invasive meningococcal disease caused by group B. Until recently, even if your child was vaccinated for meningococcal meningitis, he or she was not protected against MenB. Group B accounts for approximately 50% of all meningococcal disease cases in persons 17 to 23 years of age in the US.

Typical adolescent behaviors can spread meningitis, such as living in close quarters, or sharing drinks, cups, or utensils—and even kissing. Outbreaks of the disease at various colleges in 2015, such as Providence College and the University of Oregon, underscore the risk. The consequences of getting MenB can be deadly. However, MenB is a vaccine preventable disease.

At first, meningitis symptoms may seem like the flu, but it can lead to death in 24 hours.

### Example of how symptoms may progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First phase</th>
<th>Second phase</th>
<th>Third phase</th>
<th>Fourth phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(0-8 hours)</td>
<td>(8+ hours)</td>
<td>(13-16 hours)</td>
<td>(16+ hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever, headache, nausea, vomiting</td>
<td>Decreased appetite, nausea, vomiting</td>
<td>Drowsiness, difficulty breathing, neck stiffness</td>
<td>Sensitivity to light, rash, confusion, delirium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adolescents and young adults who survive MenB may have permanent, long-term consequences including permanent, long-term consequences including:

1 in 5 adolescents and young adults who has not received at least one vaccination for groups A, C, W, and Y at ages 13 to 17.

Vaccination is critical to helping to protect your child. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that a MenB vaccine series may be administered to adolescents and young adults aged 16 through 23 years to provide short-term protection against most strains of MenB disease. The preferred age for MenB vaccination is 16 through 18 years old. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that a MenB vaccine may be administered to adolescents and young adults. Talk to your healthcare provider about vaccinating your child against MenB disease.

Learn more about the risks, signs, and symptoms of meningitis:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- National Meningitis Association
- Meningitis Angels
- MeetMeningitis.com

References: