

#24YOUHAVETHEPOWER TIP SHEET

Talking to Your Healthcare Professional about Meningococcal Disease, Immunisation, and Your Adolescent or Young Adult

This tip sheet provides information on Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD). IMD includes meningitis (an inflammation of the brain and spinal cord) and blood poisoning (septicaemia) caused by meningococcal bacteria. The word meningitis is used to encompass all forms of IMD in this tip sheet.

You can't be with your adolescent or young adult 24/7. Even if you could, the meningococcal bacteria is spread through normal adolescent behaviours^{1,2} (e.g., kissing, sharing food and drink, hanging out in crowded areas, smoking or sharing cigarettes, living in close quarters). Meningitis is rare, but can be fatal in 24 hours¹. You can help protect them by talking to a healthcare professional about vaccination.

Protection Begins with a Conversation

When it comes to helping to protect adolescents and young adults, you and your family's doctor and pharmacist can be a powerful team. Begin by talking to your healthcare professional about any concerns you may have about meningitis and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

TOP 4 Topics to Cover

- 1 The Risk.** Let your healthcare professional know you want to do everything you can to help protect your adolescent from meningitis because:
 - Up to 1 in 5 adolescents and young adults can be carriers of the bacteria that lead to meningitis without showing symptoms.³
 - Sharing drinks or kissing is normal for adolescents and young adults and these are ways the disease can spread.^{1,2}
- 2 Vaccination History:** Review your adolescent's vaccination history. There are separate vaccines available to help protect against group B and groups ACWY meningococcal disease.
- 3 Other Vaccines:** Partner with your doctor and/or pharmacist to work out a vaccination schedule. There may be other vaccines that help protect your adolescent or young adult against other vaccine-preventable diseases.
- 4 Broader Health Questions:** Ask any questions you have about meningitis, vaccination or other health concerns you have for your adolescent or young adult. It can help to write these down before your visit.

Share the Power of Knowledge. Share these tips with other parents of adolescents and young adults and encourage them to speak with their healthcare professional or pharmacist about vaccination and visit www.24YouHaveThePower.co.uk.

REFERENCES

- World Health Organization. Meningococcal meningitis, fact sheet No.141, November 2015.
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