

➤ Meningococcal disease is an uncommon but potentially fatal disease caused by infection with ***Neisseria meningitidis***, or meningococcus.

➤ **Symptoms in babies include:**

- fever
- rapid breathing or panting
- vomiting or difficulty feeding
- irritability
- lethargy or difficult to wake
- unusual crying or moaning
- rash

➤ **Symptoms in older children and adults include:**

- fever
- headache
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- neck stiffness
- muscle or joint pains
- drowsiness or confusion

These symptoms may be accompanied by the appearance of a spotty red-purple rash that looks like small bleeding points beneath the skin.

It is important to get this type of rash checked by your doctor promptly.

➤ Children under 5 years, teenagers and young adults are most at risk of contracting meningococcal disease.

➤ **Vaccination against meningococcus is the only effective way of protecting your children against meningococcal disease.**

➤ The most common disease-causing types in Australia are MenC, MenB, and MenW. Types MenY and MenA are rare. Immunity against one type doesn't provide protection against the others.

➤ **A vaccine against the MenC type is provided for free to all babies at 12 months old.**

➤ As a result of the success of the MenC vaccination program, disease caused by the MenC type has fallen, but disease caused by MenB and MenW remains a problem. MenW is becoming more common – especially in WA, NSW and Victoria. In WA, MenW is more common than any of the other types and accounts for over 70% of meningococcal disease.

➤ **The WA Government is offering a free ACWY vaccine to children aged 1-4 and teenagers aged 15-19 that covers MenW, as well as MenA, MenC, and MenY. This vaccine can be given to any age group but must be purchased privately and administered by your GP.**

➤ A safe and effective vaccine is also available against the MenB type, but it is not funded by the government because of the high cost compared to the rarity of disease. The MenB vaccine can be bought from pharmacies and administered by your GP.