



Vaccination for children at age 14

National Immunisation Programme

Protect yourself and others

You were invited to get a vaccination that will protect you against meningococcal disease. Getting this injection will prevent you from becoming ill or infecting your friends. If more young people get the vaccination, the disease is less likely to spread.

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal bacteria can cause meningitis or blood poisoning. These are very serious illnesses. Meningitis can cause permanent brain damage. For example, your memory may be affected, or you could suffer from hearing loss. Blood poisoning can severely damage your blood vessels, making it necessary to amputate a foot, hand, arm or leg. People sometimes become so ill from the bacterial infection that they die. Fortunately, you are very unlikely to become ill from meningococcal bacteria.

"If I had been given a choice, I would not have gone through this."

Felice was only an infant when her mother discovered tiny dark spots on her torso. Her grandmother was visiting and did not trust the symptom, so they rushed the baby to the hospital. As a 16-month-old infant, she was gravely ill, and turned out to have blood poisoning. To save her life, the doctors had to amputate both her legs. Felice is an adult now and has had countless operations over the years. She has a job and a boyfriend and leads an ordinary life as much as possible.

How does the bacteria get into your body?

The meningococcal bacteria spread through the air, lodging in your nose or throat. Coughing, sneezing or kissing can spread the infection. In places where people are close together, it is easy for them to infect each other. If you do become ill, it will usually be within a few days after exposure to the bacteria.

A vaccination to prevent meningococcal disease

Fortunately, you can get an injection that protects you against meningococcal disease. You were probably vaccinated against meningococcal disease when you were 14 months old. That vaccination was to protect you from type C meningococcal bacteria. The vaccination given now will protect you from several types of meningococcal bacteria: A, C, W and Y. The new vaccination will protect you for at least 10 years. This vaccine has been used for many years all across the world, so we know that it is safe.

How does it work?

The vaccine contains specific pieces of the bacteria. These specific pieces cannot make you ill. These key parts of the bacteria help your immune system recognise the meningococcal bacteria. If you do get a meningococcal infection after being vaccinated, your immune system will kill the bacteria, so you will not become ill. The vaccine is injected in your upper arm. The injection site may become red or a bit swollen. This reaction disappears after a day. On the day you get vaccinated, you can go to school or play sports as usual.

Why are you being offered the vaccination?

You may wonder why this is being offered now. Research shows that you are more likely to have the meningococcal bacteria in your nose or throat after you reach the age of 14. Also, the bacteria spreads easily among young people between the ages of 14 and 20. That is why all young people are offered this vaccination when they turn 14.

Side effects

The injection site may become a bit red or swollen. You could also have sore muscles. People sometimes have a mild fever or slight headache after the injection. You will not usually notice any symptoms after the vaccination. Serious side effects are very rare. If you do experience any discomfort after getting vaccinated and think it may be caused by the vaccination, you can report it to the Lareb Pharmacovigilance Centre at www.lareb.nl/en/. Lareb tracks and investigates all side effects.

Questions?

- The website at <https://rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/en> has information about side effects and more. The vaccine information leaflets are also available on the website.
- If you have questions, you can always contact the doctor or nurse at the local Centre for Youth and Families, or the Municipal Public Health Services (GGD) in your region.
- Are you hesitant about vaccination? Call 088 7 555 777 to contact the national helpline. English-speaking operators are available on Monday through Friday mornings.

Information about the vaccination

When you get the vaccination, the youth healthcare services (JGZ) will record your vaccination in its system and on your vaccination certificate. If you consent, JGZ will share your data with the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM). The data to be shared is details about your vaccination and personal data. The JGZ doctor or nurse will ask you and your parents if you agree with sharing your data with RIVM.

It is important that you consent to this. To be able to do its work properly, RIVM needs to know exactly which vaccinations you received. RIVM needs these data for various reasons, such as to send you a reminder, so that you receive all the vaccinations you need. And RIVM wants to know how many people in the Netherlands are vaccinated.

View your own data at Mijn.RIVM.nl

You can view and print your vaccination details at [Mijn.RIVM.nl](https://mijn.rivm.nl). This could be useful if you plan to travel abroad. You can use DigiD to log in easily and securely. Your data can only be viewed there if you previously gave consent to share your data with RIVM.

For more information, visit <https://rijksvaccinatieprogramma.nl/en/about/your-consent>.

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