

INVASIVE MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

Information for NSW General Practitioners & Aboriginal Medical Services

Please distribute this information to all staff

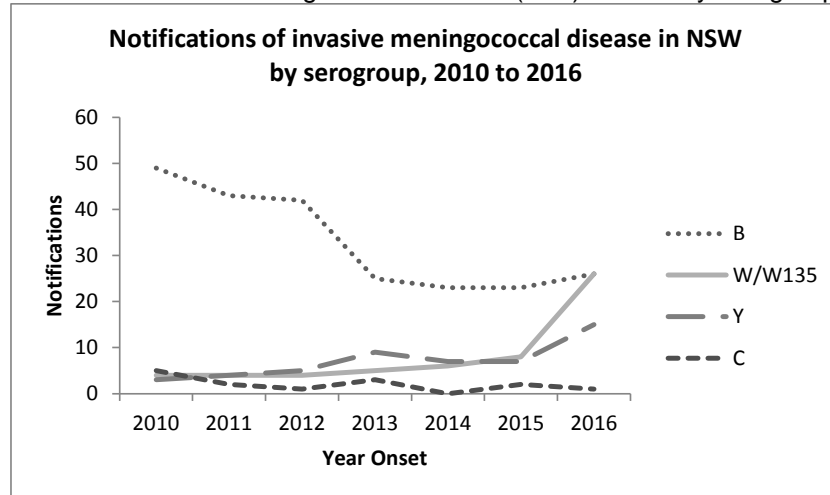


Health

1. There has been a significant increase in invasive meningococcal disease caused by serogroup W
2. NSW will be offering meningococcal ACWY vaccine (4vMenCV) to Year 11 and 12 students through a school-based vaccination program from 1 May 2017
3. GPs should be alert for meningococcal disease symptoms in all ages and will be able to offer vaccine to eligible adolescents as vaccine becomes available.

Summary

- There has been a significant increase in invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) caused by serogroup W (MenW) in NSW since 2013.



How does meningococcal disease present?

- Disease can occur in all age groups. Symptoms of meningococcal disease are non-specific but may include sudden onset of fever, headache, neck stiffness, joint pain, a rash of red-purple spots or bruises, dislike of bright lights, nausea and vomiting.
- GPs should also be alert to the possibility of atypical IMD presentation such as septic arthritis, pneumonia, and epiglottitis.
- Patients should always be advised to seek further health care if symptoms persist or worsen. If IMD is suspected, early treatment with benzylpenicillin can be lifesaving.

Meningococcal vaccination

- A single dose of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine that protects against serogroups A, C, W and Y will be offered to students in Years 11 and 12 from 1 May 2017.
- This is expected to provide good individual protection against four meningococcal strains, and contribute to herd immunity by reducing meningococcal carriage in older adolescents.
- Once sufficient supply is received for the school program, NSW Health will notify GPs of vaccine ordering arrangements for those who would normally be in Years 11 and 12 but do not attend secondary school due to other commitments.
- A vaccine against serogroup C disease is provided free to infants at 12 months of age, and should continue to be provided on time.
- In addition, vaccination for serogroup B and the A, C, Y and W serogroups is available on the private market in limited quantities. Vaccination outside the recommended cohorts is likely to provide individual protection, but not expected to achieve the same population health benefits as vaccinating older adolescents.

Further Information:

- Contact your local public health unit on **1300 066 055**
- More information www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/meningococcal.aspx

Yours sincerely

Dr Vicky Sheppeard
Director, Communicable Diseases Branch

6 February 2017