

**INFORMATION ON VACCINATION
AGAINST MENINGOCOCCAL A, C, W135 and Y
with Nimenrix®**

Dear parents or guardians,

The Austrian immunisation schedule recommends vaccination against meningococcal bacteria for all young people. Vaccination with a 4-valent conjugate vaccine against meningococcal groups A, C, W135 and Y is offered free of charge to children in school year 6 as part of Austria's childhood vaccination programme.

Meningococcal diseases are present all over the world, although the frequency of the different groups of meningococcal bacteria varies from region to region. In Austria and Europe most diseases are caused by serogroups B and C, but serogroups Y and W135 have also been found in individual cases. The frequency of serogroup Y has significantly increased in North and South America as well as in South Africa and South Asia. In Saudi Arabia serogroup W135 is the prevalent strain. In Africa, most diseases are caused by serogroup A, which is also found in the Middle East, Asia, South America and the states of the former Soviet Union. Particularly on the African continent, in the so-called meningitis belt, there are repeated outbreaks of larger epidemics, while industrialised countries mostly record only individual cases or smaller outbreaks.

Meningococcal diseases are caused by bacteria (*Neisseria meningitidis*, meningococcus). They occur mainly in children younger than 5 years old and in young people. Every year about 100 cases of meningococcal diseases are recorded in Austria, some of which can become serious. Meningococcal bacteria can also settle temporarily in the throat or nasal cavity of people without them becoming ill themselves.

The bacteria are transmitted from person to person through direct contact with respiratory secretions. This means that people who carry these bacteria on the mucous membranes of their nose and throat can pass them on to other people by coughing, sneezing or kissing.

Thus, transmission occurs especially in places where people come into close contact with each other. Meningococcal bacteria can cause life-threatening illnesses like meningitis or blood poisoning (sepsis). Between 2 and 10 days after the infection symptoms such as a quickly rising fever, shivering (chills), vomiting, headache, a stiff neck, joint and muscle pain, cramps, a dislike of bright lights and drowsiness can occur individually or together. Another typical sign is a red pinprick or blotchy rash on skin.

Please turn over – Thank you!

Babies and young children have less characteristic symptoms: fever, loss of appetite or vomiting, high-pitched cry or moaning whimper, anxiety, sensitivity to touch, a stiff neck and a blank expression. In most cases, young children will also develop the typical rash.

Meningococcal diseases can result in permanent neurological damage. In serious cases, especially if treated too late, they can also cause death.

The vaccine is a 4-valent conjugate vaccine against meningococcal bacteria, which contains surface components of meningococcal serogroups A, C, W135 and Y. After vaccination, the human body produces antibodies which prevent the onset of a disease in the case of infection with these bacteria. The vaccine does not protect against diseases caused by meningococcal bacteria of group B. The 4-valent conjugate vaccine against meningococcal bacteria currently used is **Nimenrix®**.

Side effects

Like other medicines, vaccines can also cause unwanted side effects. Together with this information sheet, you will also receive the patient leaflet for the vaccine, which contains information about its composition, possible contraindications and side effects. Please report any reactions and side effects, especially such which are not listed in the patient leaflet, to your doctor immediately.

Getting vaccinated

A vaccination can only be performed by the school doctors of Municipal Department 15 – Public Health Services if the child's parents/guardians have signed and submitted the consent form. However, your consent does not guarantee that your child will automatically be vaccinated. This decision is made by the doctor on the basis of the information you have provided.

If your child has been ill or has received any other vaccination in the period of time between filling in the consent form and the actual vaccination appointment, please tell the doctor or your child's class teacher before the vaccination.

PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILD BRING ALL VACCINATION DOCUMENTS (health passport, vaccination passport, vaccination card).

This will help the doctor to check which vaccine your child needs.

THANK YOU!