

Bexsero

A new vaccine to prevent Meningococcal Meningitis Serotype B

Q. What is Meningococcal Meningitis Serotype B?

An infection that involves the linings covering the brain and spinal cord. The disease often starts with symptoms that are similar to those of the flu, but rapidly progress to cause brain damage, loss of a limb and death.

Q. Is this a new illness?

A. No, but it was rarely seen in the United States and is most common in Europe and Africa. In recent years there have been outbreaks in six major universities including 3 in California. We have had one case in our practice.

Q. Who needs this vaccine?

Individuals between ages 17 and 25 years of age who are in group situations such as college, the army, or traveling to foreign countries, etc. are the most vulnerable to this disease.

Q. Don't we already have a Meningococcal Vaccine?

Yes, but it does not prevent this type of the disease and it is doubtful that the 2 vaccines can be combined in the future.

Q. How is it given?

A. Two injections are given at least 1 month apart to achieve full immunity.

Q. Will insurance cover the Vaccine?

We expect that they will, since the United States Center for Communicable Disease has approved the vaccine. We will be monitoring all of the insurance companies that we take to see that they do.

Q. Is the Vaccine effective?

A. 80 to 85% of those receiving the two doses of the vaccine have achieved immunity to Meningococcus Serotype B.

Q. Is the vaccine safe?

While there have been a number of symptoms directly and indirectly related to the vaccine (local pain, redness, swelling at the site of the injection, headache, etc.) there has been only one significant allergic reaction in over 3,000 patients after taking the vaccine.

We are now giving this vaccine to all of our patients over 16 years of age who are at risk (college, military, foreign travel, etc.) for this devastating disease. If you would like your child to have this immunization, we would be happy to schedule an appointment to have the vaccine alone, or given at any checkup over 16 years of age, or appointment where your child is not acutely ill.