

Leonie's story

It was on New Year's Eve that eleven-month old Leonie (name changed) fell ill. Her breathing was shallow, she was running a high temperature and she was restless and agitated. On New Year's day her parents then drove her to hospital, where despite running tests, the doctors were unable to diagnose anything specific and sent her home. A second visit again resulted in the family returning home with no diagnosis. It was only on the third visit to hospital, by which time dark blotches had appeared all over Leonie's body, that a diagnosis could be confirmed - meningococcal meningitis, in the wake of which she had developed sepsis.

Leonie survived. But her illness has exacted a terrible toll, leaving her unable to swallow and having to be fed through a tube. She now also has kidney disease, her immune system is weakened and she has scars on her legs, having gone through over 20 operations on her left leg alone.

Leonie is a little fighter and a very happy girl. But she still suffers every day from the consequences of meningococcal disease. Her doctors are still fighting to save her right leg from amputation.



Vaccinations are the best available protection from meningococcal diseases and their long-term consequences.



The most important messages of the meningococci awareness campaign



Meningococci can trigger a rare but life-threatening disease



1 in 5 patients are left with long-term problems, such as scarring or loss of limbs



There are various vaccinations available to protect your child



Ask your pediatrician

LEGAL DISCLOSURE

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What exactly are meningococci?

An information brochure for parents



Infants and young children are most at risk of coming down with meningococcal disease

What exactly are meningococci?

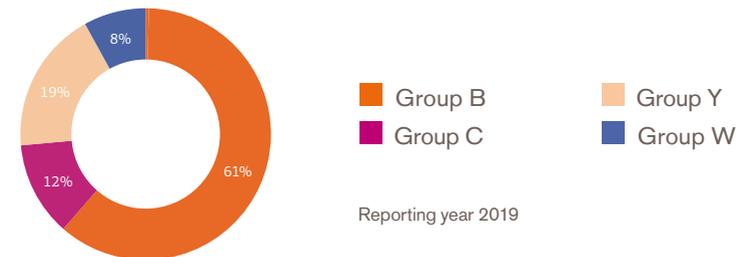
Meningococci are bacteria.

About one in ten people have them in their nose and throat without any discernable symptoms.¹ Meningococci can trigger rare but serious diseases, which can take a life-threatening course within a matter of just a few hours.²

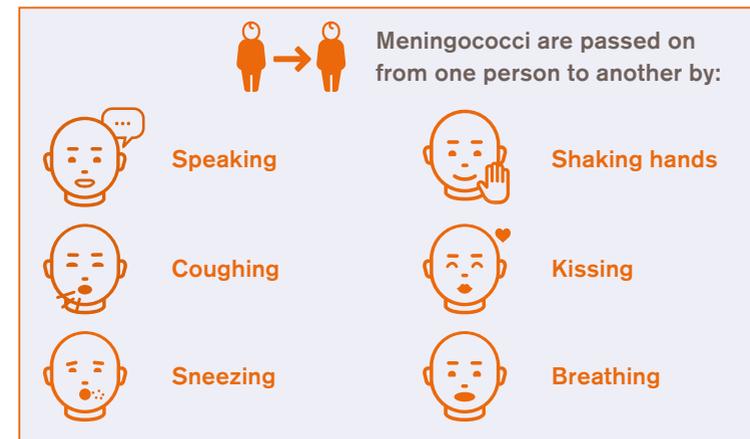
One in 5 cases have long-term consequences such as scarring or amputations.³ Meningococcal disease can be fatal in 1 in 10 cases.² There are approximately 260 cases of meningococcal disease in Germany a year.⁶

Group B meningococcal diseases are the most common in Germany – followed by groups Y and C.⁶

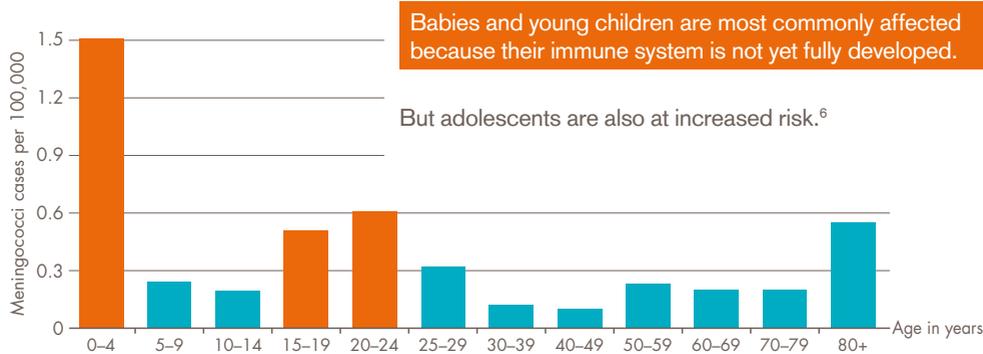
Meningococcal cases in Germany⁶



How are meningococci transmitted?



Who is especially at risk?



How do I know it is meningococcal disease?

The first signs include flu-like symptoms, fever, headache and chills.⁵ In some cases, there may be the first signs of meningococcal sepsis (blood poisoning). These include cold hands and feet, an unnatural skin colour or severe pain in the legs.

The characteristic symptoms of meningococcal disease in infants and young children include fever and vomiting, a bulging fontanelle, sensitivity to touch, refusing food, stiff neck, seizures, apathy or also irritability.



What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of meningococcal disease are often non-specific, making early diagnosis difficult, even for experienced doctors. The signs of a serious course of the disease may be pinpoint-size lesions or larger bruise-like markings on the skin and mucous membranes as well as a drop in blood pressure and organ failure.²

Even though meningococcal diseases are relatively rare in Germany – where there are some 260 cases a year⁶ – the disease can advance swiftly and patients can develop serious and life-threatening symptoms within a matter of just a few hours.²

Meningococci symptom check

What signs should you watch out for?



What are the potential consequences?

Two thirds of those affected suffer from meningitis, an infection of the protective membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. About one third of cases of meningococcal disease result in sepsis.² About 1 in 5 patients will have long-term consequences such as brain injury, learning disabilities or hearing loss. Depending on the severity of the disease, it may even be necessary to amputate limbs. The outcome is fatal in up to 1 in 10 of those affected, despite intensive medical care.²

- 2/3 meningitis
- 1/3 sepsis
- 1 in 5 patients will have long-term consequences
- 1 in 10 patients do not survive

What should I do if I suspect meningococcal disease?

Parents should act quickly if they suspect meningococcal disease. It is important to take your child to hospital immediately so that a diagnosis can be made as quickly as possible and antibiotics prescribed.

How can I best protect my child?

There are 3 different vaccines against meningococci:



The STIKO currently recommends the meningococci C vaccination for all children at the age of 12 months as standard.⁴

However, this vaccination cannot protect from the other types of meningococci. There is also a meningococci B vaccination and a combination vaccination against ACWY.



Does my health insurance pay for the vaccination?

Meningococci-B vaccination

Meningococci B, accounting for over 60% of cases, are the most common cause of the disease in Germany, followed by Y and C.⁶

The Robert Koch Institute vaccination committee, the STIKO, currently recommends the B vaccination for vulnerable patients in particular.⁴ The vaccination is also already either fully or partially covered by many health insurance companies voluntarily.

Meningococci C vaccination

The STIKO recommends the meningococci C vaccination as standard for children aged 12 months⁴ and all health insurance companies cover the cost.

Meningococci ACWY vaccination

Currently, the ACWY vaccination is already recommended for vulnerable patients and people travelling abroad.⁴ Some health insurance companies will reimburse the cost of the combination vaccination on request for those travelling abroad.

Ask for advice at your next appointment with your pediatrician or doctor and ask your health insurance provider – it's worth it!

Does your health insurance cover vaccination? Check now!



Information on meningococcal diseases and vaccinations



meningitis-bewegt.de

Does your health insurance cover vaccination? Check now!



meningitis-bewegt.de/kostenerstattung

Do you have any more questions?

Visit our campaign website at meningitis-bewegt.de or speak to your pediatrician or doctor.

You can ask your questions online at gesund-es-kind.de

More information is available here: infektionsschutz.de/erregersteckbriefe/meningokokken/

impfen-info.de/impfempfehlungen/fuer-kinder-0-12-jahre/meningokokken/infektion/

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