Meningococcal Disease in Canada

A recent survey of Canadian parents with children aged four and under revealed that:

- 7/10 parents feel they do not know enough about the different strains of meningococcal disease and the damage it can cause.
- Out of a list of 14 vaccine-preventable diseases, meningococcal disease was considered by more parents (37%) to pose a top 3 health risk to their children.

- 34% of parents don’t know or are unsure of the most common way for children to contract it.
- 68% are unsure about what vaccines for the common strains of meningococcal disease are included within the childhood immunization schedule.

Meningococcal disease is a rare, but sudden, potentially life-threatening illness that may manifest as bacterial meningitis.

In Canada, there is an average of almost 200 cases per year of invasive meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics, though it is important that treatment be started promptly as the disease can spread quickly with serious outcomes.

Even with early diagnosis & adequate treatment, of cases may end in death within 24-48 hours of the first symptoms.

10-20% of survivors may suffer subsequent life-long disability including:
- Brain damage
- Hearing loss
- Learning disability

Infants followed by adolescents are at greatest risk of contracting meningococcal disease.

5 main groups of bacteria cause the majority of cases of meningococcal disease in Canada:

- Meningococcal serogroup B is the leading cause of infection in Canada, responsible for almost 60% of cases with the next highest group being the Y strain, responsible for an average of 34 cases annually.

Disease Information
