

**Infants now receive routine Meningococcal vaccine**  
**Government of Alberta News Release - April 5, 2002**

Edmonton... Alberta is the first province to introduce a routine meningococcal conjugate vaccine program for infants. The new vaccine will be offered to all infants born on or after September 1, 2001 during routine immunization appointments.

Three doses of vaccine will be administered, beginning at two months of age. The vaccine is not effective in children younger than two months. Regional health authorities will administer the immunization. Adding the new vaccine to the routine immunization program will cost about \$6.4 million.

"I am very pleased we now can protect our infants from this life-threatening disease," said Gary Mar, Minister of Health and Wellness. "I urge parents to have their children immunized as soon as they are two-months-old."

"We are fortunate to be able to provide the vaccine to young children, especially given the three- to four-fold increase we've seen in the disease over the last couple of years in children under two," said Dr. Karen Grimsrud, Acting Provincial Health Officer. "This new vaccine will have a significant impact on the incidence of this disease in future."

The first conjugate vaccine was licensed in Canada for use in young children on April 24, 2001. It will provide long-lasting protection against meningococcal serogroup C disease, the most prevalent strain in Alberta at this time.

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