



On October 24, 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to support meningococcal vaccination of infants who are at increased risk of meningococcal disease. This includes infants with complement component deficiency and functional or anatomic asplenia (including sickle cell disease).

The National Meningitis Association (NMA) supports ACIP's decision to help protect infants most at risk for meningococcal disease by recommending vaccination beginning at 2 months of age. This is an important public health decision that will help protect these children from the potentially devastating effects of meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal vaccination continues to be recommended for other high-risk infants, including infants traveling to or living in areas where there is a higher risk for meningococcal disease.

Although it is rare, meningococcal disease moves rapidly and can lead to death or serious complications within 24-48 hours after symptoms appear. Survivors can suffer long-term consequences including brain damage, hearing loss and limb amputations. Meningococcal disease is also very difficult to identify, making prevention critical.

It is our hope that, one day, there will be meningococcal vaccines available and recommended to provide the broadest protection possible to infants at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, NMA will continue to advance its mission by educating parents of all children about meningococcal disease and alert them about available vaccination options.

We encourage every parent to ask their healthcare provider about meningococcal vaccination for their child. We also urge parents to learn about the symptoms of meningococcal disease so they can respond quickly in the event that their child becomes ill.

Please visit [www.nmaus.org](http://www.nmaus.org) for information.