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**Meningococcus** (*Neisseria meningitidis*) can cause invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) that can lead to MENINGITIS, SEPTICEMIA / MENINGOCOCCEMIA (blood infection) or both. These diseases cause PERMANENT DAMAGE such as deafness, blindness, loss of limbs, learning delays, concentration and memory deficiencies and psychological problems, nervous system alterations and brain damage. Although the numbers of cases are low, the MORTALITY IS HIGH.

**Transmission**
- From person to person by means of the SALIVA and RESPIRATORY DROPS.
- Generally, during close contact such as coughing, sneezing or kissing, or long-term contact such as living in close proximity to other people.
- INFANTS, TODDLERS, YOUNG CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS ARE AT HIGHER RISK of contracting the disease, as well as people living in crowded or group settings, those taking certain medications, or people with immunocompromised systems.

**Vaccines**
- There are 4 TYPES OF VACCINES against meningococcus, but none protects against all serogroups.
- The use, type, schedule and target population of vaccination in each country DEPENDS ON ITS EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION.
- In the Americas, six countries vaccinate against meningococcus: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cuba and the United States.
- If you live in one of these countries, CONSULT WITH YOUR HEALTH PROVIDER on the vaccination schedule.

**The data**
- In Latin America, it is estimated that 1 IN EVERY 5 CASES of invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) WILL DIE.

**Symptoms**
- They depend on the disease and age:
  - <1 year old
    - Bulging of the anterior part of the head (fontanel)
    - Seizures
    - Loss of appetite
    - Irritability without justification or other cause.
    - Fatigue
    - Fever or hypothermia
    - Spots on the body
    - Vomiting
  - ≥ 1 year of age and adults
    - Altered state of consciousness
    - Seizures
    - Headache
    - Intolerance to light
    - Fatigue
    - Fever
    - Body spots
    - Nuchal rigidity or other signs of meningeal inflammation.
    - Notable signs of hyperactivity
    - Projectile vomiting (explosive)

For more information, visit: www.paho.org/immunization