

NORTHWESTERN SCHOOL CORPORATION

According to IC 20-30-5-18 (Effective July 1, 2005), all public, non public, and charter schools must provide the following information to all parents and/or guardians of all their students.

Meningococcal Disease Information

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria. Meningococcal disease can cause an infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) or the blood. The bacteria can live in the membranes of the nose and throat, usually with no symptoms. In a small number of people, the bacteria pass to the blood, causing either a serious infection of the blood or meningitis.

The bacteria are spread from person to person by direct contact with an infected person's nose or throat secretions.

Illness often starts with a sudden fever, headache, stiff neck, a rash, and possibly nausea and vomiting. An infected person may be very sick within a few hours and should seek medical care immediately.

Babies, children, and young adults are most likely to get the disease. People living in crowded places are at higher risk for infection. Outbreaks usually do not occur in school or workplace settings.

Meningococcal disease can be prevented through good hygiene. Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, throw used tissues away and wash hands often.

There are two vaccines available to prevent this infection. **Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4), which is Menactra.** This vaccine is licensed in the U.S. for persons 11-55 years of age. It is likely that this vaccine or a similar one will be licensed for younger age groups in the future. This vaccine is recommended for young adolescents (11-12 years old), adolescents at high school entry (15 years old), and groups that will be at a higher risk such as freshmen living in a college dormitory.

Meningococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (MPSV4), which is Menomune. This vaccine is recommended for people who have an increased risk of disease due to certain medical conditions who are age 2-10 years and over 55 years. People at high risk need revaccination every 3-5 years.

For questions about meningococcal disease or vaccines to prevent meningococcal disease, please contact your physician. Additional information may be found at the following websites:

<http://www.in.gov/isdh/healthinfo/meningococcal%20disease.htm>
http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vaccine/mening/mening_fs.htm