



Dear Parent or Guardian:

As of July 2005, schools in Washington must make information available on Meningococcal and Human Papillomavirus diseases to parents or guardians of all students entering Grades 6-12.

## **Meningococcal Disease and Prevention**

### **Meningococcal Disease**

Meningococcal disease spreads by direct contact with infected persons by coughing, kissing, or sharing anything by mouth, such as water bottles, eating utensils, lipsticks, or toothbrushes. It can cause pneumonia, bloodstream infection, and meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord). Severe disease can cause brain damage, loss of hearing or limbs, and death. Fortunately, this life-threatening infection is rare – we usually have only about 30-60 reported each year in Washington, including 1 to 8 deaths. Adolescents and young adults are more likely to get meningococcal disease, especially if they live in group settings, like college dorms.

### **Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4)**

MCV4 protects your child against the most common types of bacteria that cause disease. Patients younger than 19 years of age can get MCV4 for free in Washington State. Some health care providers' offices charge an administration fee or an office visit fee. You can ask to waive the administration fee if you can't pay. Healthy teens should get one dose of vaccine during a pre-teen health checkup at age 11 thru 12 years. Teens that did not get their first dose during the pre-teen health visit should get a dose as soon as possible. A second dose (or booster) is now recommended. Teens should get a booster at age 16 thru 18 years or any time before college, but don't need it if they got the first dose on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. Teens aged 11 thru 18 years with high risk conditions like HIV, absent or defective spleens, and complement component deficiency may need more doses of this vaccine. Ask your healthcare provider how many doses your adolescent needs for a full protection.

**Learn More** Learn more about meningococcal disease and how to prevent it on the following Web sites:

### **Washington State Department of Health Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

Meningococcal information:

[www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/DiseasesandVaccines/MeningococcalVaccine.aspx](http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/DiseasesandVaccines/MeningococcalVaccine.aspx)

Meningococcal vaccine information:

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-mening.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-mening.pdf)

Disease information:

[www.cdc.gov/meningitis/about/faq.html](http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/about/faq.html)

Pre-teen immunizations:

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/preteens-adol.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/preteens-adol.htm)

College students & young adults:

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/college.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/college.htm)

### **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Vaccine Education Center**

Meningococcus questions & answers:

[www.chop.edu/vaccine/images/vec\\_mening\\_tear.pdf](http://www.chop.edu/vaccine/images/vec_mening_tear.pdf)

### **National Meningitis Association**

[www.nmaus.org](http://www.nmaus.org)

Sincerely,

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