

OVERNIGHT CHILDREN'S CAMP PARENT LETTER

Dear Parent:

I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningococcal meningitis. New York State Public Health Law (NYS PHL) §2167 and Subpart 7-2 of the State Sanitary Code requires overnight children's camps to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to all campers who attend camp for 7 or more consecutive nights.

Camp Mark 7 is required to maintain a record of the following for each camper:

- A response to receipt of meningococcal disease and vaccine information signed by the camper's parent or guardian; AND EITHER
- A record of meningococcal meningitis immunization OR
- An acknowledgement of meningococcal disease risks and refusal of meningococcal meningitis immunization signed by the camper's parent or guardian.

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial illness. It is a leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children 2 through 18 years old in the United States. Meningitis is an infection of the covering of the brain and the spinal cord. Meningococcal disease also causes blood infections. About 1,000-1,200 people get meningococcal disease each year in the U.S. Even when they are treated with antibiotics, 10-15% of these people die. Of those who live, another 11%-19% lose their arms or legs, have problems with their nervous systems, become deaf, or suffer seizures or strokes.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease. But it is most common in infants less than one year of age and people 16-21 years. Children with certain medical conditions, such as lack of a spleen, have an increased risk of getting meningococcal disease. College freshmen living in dorms are also at increased risk.

Meningococcal infections can be treated with drugs such as penicillin. Still, many people who get the disease die from it, and many others are affected for life. This is why preventing the disease through use of meningococcal vaccine is important for people at highest risk.

There are two kinds of meningococcal vaccine in the U.S.:

- Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (**MCV4**) is the preferred vaccine for people 55 years of age and younger. For example, MCV4 vaccines are Menactra™ and Menveo™.
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend two doses of MCV4 for all adolescents 11 through 18 years of age: the first dose at 11 or 12 years of age, with a booster dose at age 16. Adolescents in this age group with HIV infection should get three doses: 2 doses 2 months apart at 11 or 12 years, plus a booster at age 16.
 - If the first dose (or series) is given between 13 and 15 years of age, the booster should be given between 16 and 18. If the first dose (or series) is given after the 16th birthday, a booster is not needed.
- Meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine (**MPSV4**) has been available since the 1970s. It is the only meningococcal vaccine licensed for people older than 55. The trade name of MPSV4 is Menomune.

Both vaccines can prevent 4 types of meningococcal disease, including 2 of the 3 types most common in the United States and a type that causes epidemics in Africa. There are other types of meningococcal disease; the vaccines do not protect against these.

I encourage you to carefully review the enclosed materials. **Please complete the Meningococcal Vaccination Response Form and return it along with the other forms.**

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, please feel free to contact and/or consult your child's physician. Information about the availability and cost of the vaccine can be obtained from your health care provider. You can also find information about the disease at the website of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/default.htm.

Sincerely,

Dave Staehle
CM7 Camp Director

What is meningococcal disease? Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. It can lead to serious blood infections. When the linings of the brain and spinal cord become inflamed, it is called meningitis. The disease strikes quickly and can have serious complications including death. Anyone can get meningococcal disease. Some people are at higher risk. This disease occurs more often in people who are:

- Teenagers or young adults
- Infants younger than one year of age
- Living in crowded settings like college dormitories or military barracks
- Traveling to areas outside of the United States, such as the "meningitis belt" in Africa
- Living with a damaged spleen or no spleen
- Being treated with Soliris® or who have complement component deficiency (an inherited immune disorder)
- Exposed during an outbreak
- Working with meningococcal bacteria in a laboratory

What are the symptoms? Symptoms appear suddenly – usually 3 to 4 days after a person is infected. It can take up to 10 days to develop symptoms. Symptoms may include:

- A sudden high fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck (meningitis)
- Nausea and vomiting
- Red-purple skin rash
- Weakness and feeling very ill
- Eyes sensitive to light

How is meningococcal disease spread? It spreads from person-to-person by coughing or coming into close or lengthy contact with someone who is sick or who carries the bacteria. Contact includes kissing, sharing drinks, or living together. Up to one in 10 people carry meningococcal bacteria in their nose or throat without getting sick.

Is there treatment? Early diagnosis of meningococcal disease is very important. If it is caught early, meningococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics. But, sometimes the infection has caused too much damage for antibiotics to prevent death or serious long-term problems. Most people need to be cared for in a hospital due to serious, life-threatening infections.

What are the complications?

Ten to 15 percent of those who get meningococcal disease die. Among survivors, as many as one in five will have permanent disabilities. Complications include:

- Hearing loss
- Brain damage
- Kidney damage
- Limb amputations

What should I do if I or someone I love is exposed? If you are in close contact with a person with meningococcal disease, talk with your health care provider about the risk to you and your family. They can prescribe an antibiotic to prevent the disease.

What is the best way to prevent meningococcal disease? The single best way to prevent this disease is to be vaccinated. Vaccines are available for people 6 weeks of age and older. Various vaccines offer protection against the five major strains of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease:

- All teenagers should receive two doses of vaccine against strains A, C, W and Y. The first dose is given at 11 to 12 years of age and the second dose (booster) at age 16.
 - It is very important that teens receive the booster dose at age 16 in order to protect them through the years when they are at greatest risk of meningococcal disease.
 - Talk to your health care provider today if your teen has not received two doses of vaccine against meningococcal strains A, C, W and Y.
- Teens and young adults can also be vaccinated against the "B" strain. Talk to your health care provider about whether they recommend vaccine against the "B" strain.

Others who should receive the vaccine include:

- Infants, children and adults with certain medical conditions
- Travelers to the "meningitis belt" of Sub-Saharan Africa
- People exposed during an outbreak
- Military recruits

Please speak with your health care provider if you may be at increased risk.

What are the meningococcal vaccine requirements for school attendance? As of September 1, 2016, children entering grades 7 and 12 must be immunized against meningococcal disease strains A, C, W and Y according to the recommendations listed above.

Is there an increased risk for meningococcal disease if I travel?

- Meningococcal disease and outbreaks occur in the United States and around the world. The disease is more common in the "meningitis belt" of sub-Saharan Africa. The risk is highest in people who visit these countries and who have prolonged contact with local populations during an epidemic.
- To reduce your risk of illness, wash your hands often, maintain healthy habits such as getting plenty of rest and try not to come into contact with people who are sick.

Travel and meningococcal disease: www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/meningococcal-disease

Learn more about meningococcal disease: www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/

For more information about vaccine-preventable diseases: www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/



CAMP MARK SEVEN
144 Mohawk Hotel Road ~ Old Forge, NY 13420

MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS VACCINATION RESPONSE FORM

New York State Public Health Law requires that a parent or guardian of campers who attend an overnight children's camp for seven (7) or more consecutive nights, complete and return the following form to the camp.

Check one box and sign below.

- My child has had the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4), for example Menactra or Menveo.

DATE RECEIVED: _____

[Note: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend two doses of MCV4 for all adolescents 11 through 18 years of age: the first dose at 11 or 12 years of age, with a booster dose at age 16. Adolescents in this age group with HIV infection should get three doses: 2 doses 2 months apart at 11 or 12 years, plus a booster at age 16.

If the first dose (or series) is given between 13 and 15 years of age, the booster should be given between 16 and 18. If the first dose (or series) is given after the 16th birthday, a booster is not needed.]

- I have read or have had explained to me, the information regarding meningococcal meningitis disease. I understand the risks of not receiving the vaccine. I have decided that my child will **not** obtain immunization against meningococcal meningitis disease.

Please fill all information below:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Today's Date: _____

Camper's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Parent/Guardian's Email Address: _____