

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students:

Indiana State Law IC 20-30-5-18 requires that school systems provide important information to parents and guardians of all students about meningitis and the vaccines available to prevent one type of this serious illness at the beginning of each school year.

Meningococcal disease is a dangerous disease that can strike children and youth. The disease can progress rapidly and within hours of the first symptoms may result in death or permanent disability including loss of hearing, brain damage, and limb amputations. It can be spread through the air or by direct contact with saliva from another person with the disease.

Symptoms of meningococcal disease often resemble the flu and can include a fever, headache, nausea, and stiff neck, making the disease difficult to diagnose. There is a vaccine (Menactra) that can prevent most cases of meningitis in people over the age of 2. All students entering grades 6-12 will be required to receive one dose of Menactra. A booster dose is required for all incoming seniors each year.

The only exceptions are:

First dose of MCV4 was given at age 10 or older and another dose was given before the age of 16.

If the first dose of MCV4 was received on or after the student's 16th birthday.

Many local health departments and private healthcare providers offer this vaccine. Contact number for Knox County Immunization Clinic is 812-882-8700.

Additional Information about meningococcal disease can be found:

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/default.htm>

Meningococcal Vaccines for Preteens and Teens



All preteens and teens should get vaccines to protect against meningococcal disease. Talk with your child's doctor or nurse about meningococcal vaccination to help protect your child's health.

Why does my child need meningococcal vaccines?

Meningococcal vaccines help protect against the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease. Meningococcal disease can refer to any illness caused by a type of bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. Meningococcal disease is not very common in the United States, but teens and young adults are at increased risk.

The two most common types of illnesses include infections of the

- **Lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis)**
- **Bloodstream**

Even with treatment, about 10 to 15 out of 100 people with meningococcal disease will die from it. Meningococcal vaccines are the best way to protect preteens and teens from getting meningococcal disease.



When should my child be vaccinated?



Dose 1: Ages 11-12

Dose 2: Age 16

All preteens and teens should get 2 doses of the meningococcal conjugate (MenACWY) vaccine. They should get the first dose at ages 11-12 and a booster dose at 16 years old. If your teen hasn't gotten this meningococcal shot, talk to their doctor or nurse about getting it as soon as possible.

Teens and young adults (16 through 23 years old) may also get a serogroup B meningococcal (MenB) vaccine (2 doses). The preferred age to get MenB vaccine is 16 through 18 years old. Talk with your teen's doctor or nurse about meningococcal vaccination to help protect your child's health.

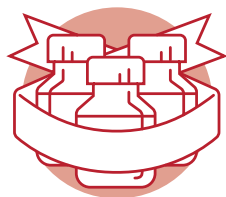
Are meningococcal vaccines safe for my child?

Researchers have studied the meningococcal vaccines very carefully and they are shown to be very safe. Like any vaccine, meningococcal vaccines may cause mild side effects, like redness and soreness where the shot was given (usually in the arm). Note that your child can get both meningococcal vaccines during the same visit, but in different arms.

Some preteens and teens might faint after getting a meningococcal vaccine or any shot. To help avoid fainting and injuries related to fainting, preteens and teens should sit or lie down when they get a shot and then for about 15 minutes after getting the shot. Serious side effects from meningococcal vaccines are rare.

How can I get help paying for these vaccines?

Most health insurance plans cover routine vaccinations. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program also provides vaccines for children 18 years and younger who are uninsured, underinsured, Medicaid-eligible, American Indian, or Alaska Native. Learn more at www.cdc.gov/Features/VFCprogram.



Talk to your child's doctor or nurse about meningococcal vaccines, or visit www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/vaccine-info.html

