

## Meningococcal Disease

August 3, 2005

Dear Parent/Guardian:

A new Indiana law requires each year that parents/guardians be informed "about meningococcal disease and its vaccine" (IC 20-30-5-18).

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.

Symptoms of meningococcal disease often resemble the flu and can include a fever, headache, nausea, and stiff neck, making the disease difficult to diagnose. The bacteria that cause meningococcal diseases are transmitted through air droplets and by direct contact with an infected person. Fortunately there is an immunization available and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends routine meningococcal immunizations at 11 to 12 years old. For teenagers, immunization is recommended at high school entry and incoming college freshman.

Please talk with your child's health care provider about meningococcal disease and vaccination.

Resources for schools and families to obtain information about meningococcal disease in addition to their local physician/health care provider and local health department include the following websites:

- The Indiana State Department of Health  
<http://www.in.gov/isdh/healthinfo/meningococcal%20disease.htm>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vaccine/mening/mening\\_fs.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vaccine/mening/mening_fs.htm)
- The Indiana Department of Education Student Services, School Health  
<http://www.doe.state.in.us/sservices/sn.htm>
- Academy of Family Physicians  
<http://www.aafp.org>
- Academy of Pediatrics  
<http://www.aap.org>