

Meningitis Information in Schools

2005 Wisconsin Act 221 requires that each school district provide the parents/guardians of students enrolled in grades 6 to 12 with information about meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal disease is a rare, but potentially deadly, bacterial infection that can take the form of meningitis (an inflammation of the membrane surrounding the brain and spinal cord) or meningococemia (a blood infection). The signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease may vary widely but include a sudden high fever, headache, vomiting, stiff neck and a rash. Sensitivity to light, sleepiness, confusion and/or seizures may occur. This bacteria is spread by direct contact with respiratory and oral secretions (saliva, sputum or nasal mucus) of an infected person.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other leading medical organizations recommend routine meningococcal immunization for adolescents during the pre-adolescent doctor's visit (11- to 12-year-olds), adolescents at high school entry (15-year-olds), if they have not previously been immunized, and college freshmen living in dormitories.

There are two vaccines (Menactra and Menomune) that will protect against four of the types of meningococcus, including 2 of the 3 types most common in the U.S.

For additional information about meningococcal disease and immunization, contact your personal health care provider, the school nurse (262-424-2868) or the local public health department (262-763-4930).

Jill Sheeley
RN BSN
District Nurse
Sheeley@waterford.k12.wi.us
262-424-2868