

December 14, 2017

Dear Parent & Student

**Re: Meningococcal outbreak in the Okanagan- school immunization clinics**

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Given an increase in meningococcal disease cases in recent months in the Okanagan, IH has declared a meningococcal outbreak for the region, impacting 15-19 year olds. The risk of transmission to the general school population related to these cases is considered extremely low. However, Interior Health is initiating a mass immunization plan to offer meningococcal quadrivalent vaccine (Men C-ACYW135) to all Grade 9-12 students and any individuals 15-19 years of age living in the Okanagan.

Meningococcal quadrivalent vaccine (Men C-ACYW135) will be offered through school-based clinics to the following:

- Grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 students not previously immunized against Men C-ACYW135.
  - Grade 10 students who received Meningococcal Quadrivalent vaccine in the 2016/17 school year are considered protected and do **not** need another dose.

Vaccine will also be available at public health centre clinics for 15-19 year olds not attending school.

**Consent for immunization**

A copy of the meningococcal vaccine consent form is attached to this email. As well, your child may bring a copy home. Together with your child please review the HealthLinkBC files [Meningococcal Quadrivalent Vaccines](#) and [The Infants Act, Mature Minor Consent and Immunization](#). **Please complete the consent form and return to the school as soon as possible.**

Students and their parents/guardians are encouraged to review the immunization information, discuss it, and together make a decision about immunization. However, parents should be aware that students in grades 9 through 12 can make an informed decision regarding immunization regardless of parental consent or refusal. This is referred to as “mature minor consent.” These students will be informed about immunization and given the opportunity to consent to or refuse immunization on their own behalf.

Meningococcal Disease is spread through contact with the saliva (spit) of a person who is sick through kissing or sharing items like water bottles, cigarettes, joints, straws, e-cigarettes, toothbrushes or any activity that involves “swapping spit.” You cannot catch this disease by being in the same room as a person with this illness and talking with them.

People who are sick with this disease may have some of the following symptoms:

- Sudden onset of high fever
- Severe headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Stiff neck

- Rash
- Drowsiness or confusion
- Seizures

Although the risk of getting this disease is very low, anyone with the above symptoms should see their doctor or emergency department immediately.

If you have any questions please contact your [local health unit](#). For more information on meningitis please visit [HealthLink BC](#) or [www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca).

Sincerely,

Karin Goodison, MD MHP, FRCPC  
Medical Health Officer

Distributed: December 14, 2017