



Health Services

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Dear Parent/Student:

You are receiving this notice because you have a student in 6th- 12th grade. Pursuant to RCW 28A.210.080, the legislature now requires that you be provided with information about the causes, symptoms, and methods of preventing Meningococcal meningitis and reducing your student's risk of contracting HPV.

Meningococcal disease is caused by a group of bacteria that lives in the nose and throat. These bacteria can cause the disease known as Meningococcal meningitis and can be fatal. Adolescents and young adults have an increased rate of contracting meningitis as compared to the general population. Symptoms of the disease may include fever, chills, rash, headaches, a stiff neck, and worsen into confusion and coma. The disease is spread through direct contact with infected material including kissing, coughing, sneezing, or sharing eating or drinking utensils. We urge you to talk to your children about good hygiene and not sharing personal items that may transmit the disease.

The Washington State Department of Health wants you to be aware of this illness and the availability of a vaccine to protect against meningitis. Vaccination can help protect against up to 83% of the meningitis diseases occurring among adolescents and young adults. While the vaccine is recommended for children entering middle school (ages 11-12) and high school (age 15), the vaccine can benefit all teenagers and young adults. **This vaccine is not required for school attendance.**

HPV is a very common virus that is spread through genital contact. At least 50 percent of sexually active people will get HPV at some time in their lives. There are many types of HPV. Some types can cause cervical cancer or genital warts. Most people with HPV have no signs or symptoms and easily spread it to others without knowing they have it.

The best way to prevent HPV infection is to abstain from all sexual activity. It is uncertain how well condoms protect against HPV infection. However, condom users do have lower cervical cancer rates. There is now a vaccine, Gardasil®, that protects against four types of HPV that cause 70 percent of cervical cancers and 90 percent of genital warts. The federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends the HPV vaccine for all girls age 11-12 years. The vaccine can be given to females as young as nine and up to 26 years if their doctor recommends it. The vaccine is not currently recommended for boys or men. **This vaccine also is not required for school attendance.**

We encourage you to learn more about Meningococcal disease and Human Papillomavirus infection and to talk to your health care provider about immunization.. The following websites can provide additional information:

Washington State Dept. of Health Immunization Program:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/meningococcal.htm>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/vis/vis-mening.pdf>

American Social Health Association

<http://www.ashastd.org>

American Cancer Society

<http://www.cancer.org>

Sincerely,
Christina Wyatt
Director of Student Services