



January 1, 2019

Dear Parent:

I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningococcal meningitis. New York State Public Health Law (NYS PHL) §2167 and Subpart 7-2 of the State Sanitary Code requires overnight children's camps to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to all campers who attend camp for 7 or more consecutive nights.

Meningococcal disease is rare. However, when it strikes, its flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult. Meningococcal disease can cause serious illness such as infection of the lining of the brain and spinal column (meningitis) or blood infections (sepsis). The disease strikes quickly and can lead to severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, and limb amputation, in as many as one in five of those infected. Ten to 15 percent of those who get meningococcal disease will die.

Meningococcal disease can be easily spread from person-to-person by coughing, sharing beverages or eating utensils, kissing, or spending time in close contact with someone who is sick or who carries the bacteria. People can spread the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease even before they know they are sick.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but certain people are at increased risk including teens and young adults 16 – 23 years old and those with certain medical conditions that affect the immune system.

The single best way to prevent meningococcal disease is to be vaccinated. The meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY) vaccine protects against four major strains of bacteria which cause meningococcal disease in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a single dose of MenACWY vaccine at age 11 through 12 years with a booster dose given at age 16 years. Children are not routinely recommended to receive MenACWY vaccine prior to the recommended ages, unless they have certain underlying medical conditions which increase their risk of disease. The meningococcal B (MenB) vaccine protects against a fifth strain of meningococcal bacteria which causes meningococcal disease. Young adults aged 16 through 23 years may be vaccinated with MenB vaccine and should discuss the MenB vaccine with a healthcare provider.

I encourage you to carefully review the attached Meningococcal Disease Fact Sheet. It is also available on the New York State Department of Health website at: <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2168.pdf>.

Information about the availability and cost of meningococcal vaccine can be obtained from your healthcare provider or your local health department. Please contact your healthcare provider about vaccination.

Seneca Waterways Council Camps (Camp Babcock-Hovey, J. Warren Cutler Scout Reservation, Camp Babcock-Hovey) are required to maintain a record for each camper, signed by the camper's parent or guardian, which documents the following:

- Receipt and review of meningococcal disease and vaccine information;
AND EITHER
- Certification that the camper has been immunized against meningococcal meningitis within the past 10 years; OR
- An understanding of meningococcal disease risks and benefits of vaccination at the recommended ages and the decision not to obtain immunization against meningococcal meningitis at this time.

To learn more about meningococcal meningitis and the vaccine, please feel free to contact consult your child's physician. You can also find information about the disease at the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/default.htm.

Sincerely,

Christopher Guarniere
Director of Support Services / Chief Program Officer

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MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS VACCINATION RESPONSE FORM

New York State Public Health Law requires that a parent or guardian of campers who attend an overnight children's camp for seven (7) or more consecutive nights, complete and return the following form to the camp.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends two doses of MenACWY vaccine (Brand names: Menactra, Menveo) for all healthy adolescents 11 through 18 years of age: the first dose is given at 11 or 12 years of age, with a booster dose at 16 years of age. Children and adolescents with certain medical conditions may need to begin the MenACWY series at a younger age and/or receive additional doses. Consult with your child's healthcare provider regarding any medical conditions they may have.

If the first dose is given between 13 and 15 years of age, the booster should be given between 16 and 18 years of age. If the first dose is given after the 16th birthday, a booster is not needed.

Young adults aged 16 through 23 years may choose to receive the Meningococcal B vaccine series (Brand names: Trumenba, Bexsero). Parents/guardians should discuss the Meningococcal B vaccine with a healthcare provider.

Check one box and sign below.

- I have received and reviewed the information regarding meningococcal meningitis. My child has received meningococcal immunization (Menactra or Menveo) within the past 10 years.

Date received: _____

OR

I have received and reviewed the information regarding meningococcal meningitis. I understand the risks of meningococcal meningitis and the benefits of immunization at the recommended ages.

- I have decided that **my child**, who is **younger than 11 years of age**, will **not** obtain immunization against meningococcal disease at this time; or

- I have decided that **my child**, who is **11 years of age or older**, will **not** obtain immunization against meningococcal disease at this time.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Parent / Guardian)

Camper's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Parent/Guardian's E-mail Address (optional): _____