Dear Parent,

Has your child received a vaccination against meningococcal disease, also known as bacterial meningitis? If so, that vaccine may not help protect your child against all strains of this invasive disease. We are providing this valuable brochure to alert you to the availability of separate vaccines that can help protect against meningococcal group B disease (also known as meningitis B) which your child may not have yet received.[1]

Why is this important for your child? Invasive meningococcal disease, while uncommon, can turn deadly within 24 hours.[2] And meningitis B is responsible for approximately 40% of meningococcal disease in U.S. adolescents and young adults.[3]

Please read the information on the following pages. Then talk to your healthcare provider about getting your child immunized against meningitis B.

Sincerely,
Your Child's School Health Team

P.S. Ask your child to give you the Best to Know quiz about meningococcal disease that he or she took in class. See how well you do with it. You'll find the answers at the bottom of page 4 of this brochure.

What You Need To Know About Meningococcal Disease

- Meningococcal disease, including meningitis B, is a bacterial infection that can attack the brain and spinal cord.[4]
- Although rare, meningococcal disease can lead to death or permanent harm within 24 hours. Ten percent of those who develop meningococcal disease will die. Three in five adolescent survivors of meningococcal disease experience permanent physical and mental disabilities such as brain damage, vision loss, and amputations.[2,5,6]
- There are 5 common types of the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease in the United States: A, C, Y, W, and B. There have been vaccines that help protect against A, C, Y, and W, but until 2014, there was no vaccine in the United States to help protect against type B.[1,7]
- Now there are separate vaccines that help protect against meningitis B, which is responsible for approximately 40% of meningococcal disease in U.S. adolescents and young adults.[3]
- Early symptoms of meningococcal disease may seem like the flu, so they might be ignored until it is too late. But you can help protect your child from meningococcal disease, including meningitis B, with vaccination.[4]

Is Your Child At Risk?

Teens and young adults are at increased risk for meningococcal disease, and the risk is even greater for those who live in college dormitories. This is because the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease are spread through typical adolescent behaviors, like kissing and sharing drinks, food, eating utensils, and cosmetics, and close contact in small groups.[4]

Approximately 24% of young adults are carriers of the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease, but many carriers show no symptoms of the disease and do not become sick.[8] They can, however, infect others. That's why it is important to help protect against infection with vaccination.

Signs to Look For

Meningococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics, but it must be caught early — it can cause death within 24 hours. Unfortunately, early symptoms often resemble the flu, so your child may not realize it's something serious right away.[2,4]

Symptoms include:[2]
- Stiff neck
- Fever and chills
- Sudden onset of fever
- Confusion
- Severe headache

Other telltale signs that may be apparent:[2]
- Purple, bruise-like areas (purpura)
- Rash with pinpoint red spots (petechiae)
- Sensitivity to light
- Nausea and vomiting

Help protect your child from meningococcal disease.

Talk to your child's physician about meningococcal disease and the separate vaccines now available to help protect against meningitis B.

Questions to ask your child's physician:

- Has my child been vaccinated against meningococcal disease?
- Did the vaccination he/she received protect against meningitis B?
- Can my child be vaccinated against meningitis B?
- What are the potential side effects?
- When should my child be vaccinated?

For more information, visit **www.ActionAgainstMeningitis.com**, and take the pledge to take action against meningococcal meningitis. For each pledge, Pfizer will donate $1 — up to $20,000 — to Adaptive Action Sports, which helps adolescents, young adults, and wounded veterans with permanent disabilities get involved in action sports.

Be sure to check with your child's physician about getting him or her vaccinated against the most common forms of the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease, including B.

Quiz Answers: 1. False; meningococcal disease, like meningitis B, is spread through direct contact with throat or respiratory secretions. 2. True. 3. False; carriers of the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease may show no symptoms and may not get sick. 4. True. 5. False; many states require college freshmen living in dormitories to be vaccinated against meningitis, but the vaccines available before 2014 in the U.S. only protected against serogroups A, C, W, and Y, not B. 6. True; there are now separate vaccines that can help protect against meningitis B. 7. True. 8. False; the vaccines available for meningitis B are dispensed in several doses. 9. True, but early symptoms of meningococcal disease often resemble the flu and can easily be ignored until it is too late. 10. False; approximately 60% of adolescents who survive meningococcal disease suffer permanent physical and mental disabilities.

References: 1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prevention and control of meningococcal disease: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). *MMWR.* 2013;62(RR-2):1-28. **2.** Thompson MJ, Ninis N, Perera R, et al. Clinical recognition of meningococcal disease in children and adolescents. *Lancet.* 2006;367(9508):397-403. **3.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Epidemiology of serogroup B meningococcal disease, United States. Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, October 30, 2014. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/downloads/slides-2014-10/mening-02-MacNeil.pdf. Accessed March 26, 2015. **4.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Meningococcal disease. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/index.html. Updated April 1, 2014. Accessed October 16, 2014. **5.** Cohn AC, MacNeil JR, Harrison LH, et al. Changes in *Neisseria meningitidis* disease epidemiology in the United States, 1998-2007: implications for prevention of meningococcal disease. *Clin Infect Dis.* 2010;50(2):184-191. **6.** Borg J, Christie D, Coen PG, et al. Outcomes of meningococcal disease in adolescence: prospective, matched-cohort study. *Pediatrics.* 2009;123:e502-e509. **7.** McNeil LK, Zagurksy RJ, Lin SL, et al. Role of factor H binding protein in *Neisseria meningitidis* virulence and its potential as a vaccine candidate to broadly protect against meningococcal disease. *Microbiol Mol Biol Rev.* 2013;77(2):234-252. **8.** Christensen H, May M, Bowen L, et al. Meningococcal carriage by age: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Infect Dis.* 2010;10(12):853-861