

Dear Chehalis School District Families:

Schools in Washington are required to provide information on meningococcal disease to parents or guardians of all students entering grades 6-12.

Meningococcal disease is a serious infection of the brain (meningitis) and blood caused by a bacteria. Fortunately, this life-threatening infection is rare — only about 75 people are infected each year in Washington. Adolescents and young adults are most likely to get meningococcal disease, especially those living in group settings such as college dormitories.

The Department of Health wants you to be aware of meningococcal disease and how your child may prevent it. Talk to your children about good hygiene (regular hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, etc.) and warn them not to share items that may spread meningococcal disease and other bacteria and viruses: eating utensils, glasses, cups, water bottles, drinks, lip gloss or toothbrushes.

A meningococcal vaccine is available and recommended for boys and girls starting at age 11 or 12. It is a two-dose series with the booster dose after the age of 16. The vaccine can prevent up to 65 percent of meningococcal disease among adolescents and young adults. Talk with your student's doctor for more information about the meningococcal vaccine. The meningococcal vaccine not required for school or college attendance.

We encourage you to learn more about meningococcal disease and how to prevent it. More information on meningococcal disease, including signs and symptoms and vaccination, is available on the following web sites:

<https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/>

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/Meningitis>

<https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/index.html>