



Public Health
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Linn County, Iowa



UnityPoint Health
Cedar Rapids

Meningococcal Vaccine School Requirement

Attention: Teachers, Parents, Coaches and Student Activity Directors of Students Entering 7th and 12th Grades for the 2017-18 School Year

The Iowa Department of Public Health, along with its community healthcare partners, is issuing new instructions regarding mandatory vaccines for students enrolling in 7th and 12th grades for the 2017-18 school year. **Those students must be fully vaccinated against meningococcal disease in order to attend school next year.**

Linn County health care providers are united in this initiative to keep our children and young adults protected from meningococcal infection.

Families of students should contact their healthcare provider for an appointment to receive the required vaccine. Those vaccinations may take place now, or at any time prior to the beginning of the school year, and completed immunization forms can be turned in to the school nurse's office.

The meningococcal vaccine protects against serious and sometimes deadly diseases, such as meningitis (an infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and sepsis (blood infections).

The vaccine is administered as a shot.

Requirements for the 2017-18 school year:

- **One dose of meningococcal vaccine for students who will be in 7th grade (if born after Sept. 15, 2004).** If the child had the first dose on or after the age of 10, then another dose is not required until he/she is 16 years old.
- **One dose of meningococcal vaccine for students who will be in 12th grade (if born after Sept. 15, 1999).** If the student had the vaccine on or after the age of 16, then another dose is not required.

By law, students who are not up-to-date will not be allowed to attend school or participate in school activities until they are vaccinated.



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What is Meningococcal Disease?

Meningococcal disease is a rare but very serious disease that can strike healthy young people without warning. Approximately 10-15% of people with meningitis die, even with appropriate treatment. Of those who recover, up to 20% suffer from serious after effects such as permanent hearing loss, limb loss or brain damage.

Why is the Vaccine Required?

The meningococcal vaccine is the best protection from this very serious disease. Meningococcal vaccines are very safe and 85-100% effective at preventing infection. The meningococcal vaccine requirement will help keep students, families and our communities safe.

What do I do now?

Schedule an appointment with your healthcare provider and ask about the meningococcal vaccine. If your child doesn't have a regular healthcare provider, the school nurse can offer assistance in referring students. Summer school or sports physicals are also an excellent time to take care of this new requirement.

For more information on meningococcal disease, visit: <http://idph.iowa.gov/cade/disease-information/meningitis>. We thank you for your efforts to keep children and families in our community safe.

Sincerely,

Linn County

Health Care Providers