

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students:

Indiana State Law IC 20-30-5-18 requires that school systems provide important information to parents and guardians of all students about meningitis and the vaccines available to prevent one type of this serious illness at the beginning of each school year.

Meningococcal disease is a dangerous disease that can strike children and youth. The disease can progress rapidly and within hours of the first symptoms may result in death or permanent disability including loss of hearing, brain damage, and limb amputations. It can be spread through the air or by direct contact with saliva from another person with the disease.

Symptoms of meningococcal disease often resemble the flu and can include a fever, headache, nausea, and stiff neck, making the disease difficult to diagnose. There is a vaccine (Menactra) that can prevent most cases of meningitis in people over the age of 2. All students entering grades 6-12 will be required to receive one dose of Menactra. A booster dose is required for all incoming seniors each year.

The only exceptions are:

First dose of MCV4 was given at age 10 or older and another dose was given before the age of 16.

If the first dose of MCV4 was received on or after the student's 16th birthday.

Many local health departments and private healthcare providers offer this vaccine. Contact number for Knox County Immunization Clinic is 812-882-8700.

Additional Information about meningococcal disease can be found:

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/default.htm>