

North Putnam Community School Corporation

School Health and Nursing Services

Bainbridge Elem. School
522-6233

Roachdale Elem. School
522-1732

North Putnam Middle School
522-2900

North Putnam High School
522-6282

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April 28, 2010

Dear Parent, 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.

One type of meningitis is caused by a bacteria called *Neisseria meningitides*. Infections caused by this bacteria are serious, and may lead to death. Symptoms of an infection with *Neisseria meningitides* may include high fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, confusion, and a rash. This disease can become severe very quickly and often leads to deafness, mental retardation, loss of arms or legs, and even death. It can be spread through the air or by direct contact with saliva from another person with the disease.

There is a vaccine (Menactra) that can prevent most cases of meningitis caused by this bacteria in people over the age of 2. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination against this disease for all children and adolescents 11-18 years of age. Children ages 2-10 who have sickle cell anemia or problems with their immune systems should also receive this vaccine.

Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, one dose of Menactra (MCV4) will be required for students in grades 6-12. This is a new legal requirement (IC 20-34-4-2 & IC 4-22-2). All students entering grades 6-12 will need to have a record of this immunization on file. The school system will need a signed written statement from a medical provider as proof of the vaccination or proof of immunization will need to be in the state immunization registry (CHIRP). Check with your doctor to see if your child's record is available in the state immunization registry (CHIRP).

The Putnam County Department of Health (653-5210), as well as most private healthcare providers, offers this vaccine. Please do not wait until August to obtain the vaccination for your child as appointments are usually booked in August. Once the vaccination has been obtained, you can send verification to the school nurse and she will enter that information into the school system's health data base as verification that your child's immunizations are up-to-date and meet ISDH/IDOE immunization requirements.

Additional information about meningococcal disease can be found at:

The Indiana State Department of Health (<http://www.in.gov.isdh/22121/htm>).

The Indiana Department of Education School Health Student Services (<http://www.doe.in.gov/sservices/sn.htm>)

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

Please talk with your child's health care provider about meningococcal disease and vaccination.

Yours in Good Health,

Marilynn Unger, RN, Elementary School Nurse
Bev Richardson, RN, NPMS/NPHS School Nurse