



MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE INFORMATION

Dear Parent:

I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningococcal meningitis. New York State Public Health Law (NYS PHL) §2167 and Subpart 7-2 of the State Sanitary Code requires overnight children's camps to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to all campers who attend camp for 7 or more consecutive nights.

Camp Toras Chaim Tashbar is required to maintain a record of the following for each camper:

- A response to receipt of meningococcal disease and vaccine information signed by the camper's parent or guardian; AND EITHER
- A record of meningococcal meningitis immunization OR
- An acknowledgement of meningococcal disease risks and refusal of meningococcal meningitis immunization signed by the camper's parent or guardian.

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial illness. It is a leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children 2 through 18 years old in the United States. Meningitis is an infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. Meningococcal disease also causes blood infections.

About 1,000- 1,200 people get meningococcal disease each year in the U.S. Even when they are treated with antibiotics, 10-15% of these people die. Of those who live, another 11-19% lose their arms and legs, have problems with their nervous systems, become deaf, or suffer seizures or strokes.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease. But it is most common in infants less than one year of age and people 16-21 years. Children with certain medical conditions, such as lack of a spleen, have an increased risk of getting meningococcal disease. College freshmen living in dorms are also at increased risk.

Infections can be treated with drugs such as penicillin. Still, many people who get the disease die from it, and many others are affected for life. This is why preventing the disease through use of vaccine is important for people at highest risk.

There are two kinds of meningococcal vaccines in the U.S.:

- Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) is the preferred vaccine for people 55 years of age and younger. For example, 2 MCV4 vaccines are Menactra™ and Menveo™. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend two doses of for all adolescents 11 through 18 years of age, with a booster dose at age 16. Adolescents in this age group with HIV infection should get three doses: 2 doses 2 months apart at 11 or 12 years, plus a booster at age 16.

If the first dose (or series) is given between 13 and 15 years of age, the booster should be given between 16 and 18. If the first dose (or series) is given after the 16th birthday, a booster is not needed.

- Meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine (MPSV4) has been available since the 1970's. It is the only meningococcal vaccine licensed for people older than 55. The trade name of MPSV4 is Menomune™.

Both vaccines can prevent 4 types of meningococcal disease, including 2 of the 3 types most common in the United States and a type that causes epidemics in Africa. There are other types of meningococcal disease; the vaccines do not protect against these.

Information about the availability and cost of the vaccine can be obtained from your healthcare provider. CAMP TASHBAR does not offer meningococcal immunization services.

I encourage you to carefully review the enclosed materials. **Please complete the Camp's Medical form including the date of your son's immunization for Meningococcal disease.** If you object to having your son receive this immunization please check the box with the asterisk at the bottom of the Medical Form and sign.

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, please feel free to contact the camp office and/or consult your child's physician. You can also find information about the disease at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/menig/default.htm.

Sincerely,

Rabbi A. Dembitzer
Director