



[Nurse Name]
[School Address]
[Phone]
[Current Date]

Re: Local Case of Meningococcal Disease

Dear Parent or Guardian,

As your child's school nurse, I'm writing to let you know that a case of meningococcal disease has been reported [in or near] our community.

According to a national survey* recently conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of *Voices of Meningitis*, an educational initiative from the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) in collaboration with Sanofi Pasteur, two out of three mothers have little to no knowledge of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendations to help prevent meningococcal meningitis. The recommendations advise that a child receive an initial vaccination at age 11 or 12 years, followed by a second vaccination at age 16.¹

As your school nurse, I am hoping to help change these statistics and make sure parents are aware of these guidelines to help prevent meningitis. I encourage you to talk to your healthcare provider to ensure your child is up-to-date with all of his or her vaccinations to help protect against this disease.

Meningococcal disease is a rare, but serious bacterial infection that progresses very quickly and can claim the life of an otherwise healthy child in as little as 24 hours after the first symptoms appear.^{2,3}

It is important that you familiarize yourself with the signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease and ways to protect against it. The disease can be difficult to recognize, especially in the beginning, because symptoms can be very similar to those of common viral illnesses, such as the flu.³

Now is a good time to talk with your children and family members about healthy habits to help protect against meningococcal disease. It can be spread through coughs, sneezes, and the exchange of respiratory droplets such as saliva.¹ As a result, individuals can catch the disease through common, everyday activities such as sharing water bottles, cups and utensils; kissing; and being in close quarters such as a dormitory or sleep-away summer camp.^{2,4} Fatigue may also raise the risk of meningococcal disease, possibly by weakening the immune system.⁵

I am here to help you in any way I can. Please call or visit me at my office if you have questions or concerns. I can be reached at [PHONE NUMBER] and am in my office [INSERT OFFICE HOURS FOR VISITS]. You can also talk to your child's healthcare provider or visit www.VoicesOfMeningitis.org for more information.

Sincerely,
[INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL NURSE]
Your School Nurse

References:

*NOTE: Based on a March 2014 survey of 2,003 mothers, who are the parent or guardian of at least one child between the ages of 11-18 living in their household conducted online by Harris Poll. A full methodology is available upon request.

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1. CDC. Prevention and control of meningococcal disease – recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*. 2013;62(2):1-13. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6202a1.htm>. Accessed July 31, 2013.
2. Stephens DS, Greenwood B, Brandtzaeg P. Epidemic meningitis, meningococcaemia, and Neisseria meningitidis. *Lancet*. 2007;369(9580):2199.
3. Pace, D. & Pollard, A. (2012) Meningococcal disease: Clinical presentation and sequelae. *Vaccine*. 30(S), 87.
4. CDC. Meningococcal Disease. About: Causes and Transmission. <http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/causes-transmission.html>. Accessed March 24, 2014.
5. CDC. Meningococcal Disease. <http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/>. Accessed March 24, 2014.

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Voices of Meningitis is made possible through a collaboration with Sanofi Pasteur