

An Update For Parents On Meningococcal Vaccination And Upcoming Clinic Dates

Since 2003 routine immunization against meningococcal disease has been recommended and publicly funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. Since adolescence is an age when there is increased risk of Meningitis, students in grade 7 and 15-19 years olds were offered the Meningococcal C vaccine as a "catch-up" program since they would have been too old to have received it as a small child. When the program started, one meningococcal C vaccination was thought to be enough to protect children for life.

In Ottawa, Meningococcal C vaccine was first provided to Grade 7 students by Ottawa Public Health at School Immunization clinics in the spring of 2007. It was offered to Grade 7 students the following year at school immunization clinics in November 2008.

In April 2009 the Public Health Agency of Canada's NACI (National Advisory Committee on Immunizations) published a statement which recommended that even if they had received a conjugate meningococcal vaccine previously, adolescents would benefit from receiving a booster dose of either Meningococcal C or Meningococcal C-ACWY (Menactra™). This second "booster" dose would ensure that students' immunity remains high during adolescence when they are more at risk for meningitis.

In June 2009 the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care announced that they would be funding Menactra™ a meningococcal vaccine that covers four strains of meningitis. Publicly funded **immunization with Menactra™ is only available for Grade 7 students and only through school clinics or "Catch-up" clinics**. It is also available at a cost at family physician's offices.

All other students 12-21 still remain eligible for the free Meningococcal C vaccine (Menjugate® or Neis-vac®), which is available at "Catch-up" clinics, at seasonal flu clinics and through family physician's offices.

For more information on meningococcal or other vaccines call Ottawa Public Health Information (OPHI) at 613-447-1453 or visit the Ottawa Public Health website at ottawa.ca/health.

The Immunization Clinic at our school (Meningococcal ACWY- Menactra™ for Grade 7 students and HPV - Gardasil™ - for Grade 8 girls) will take place on:

