

Beginning with the 2017 – 2018 school year students entering grade 7 and grade 12 must be vaccinated against meningococcal disease in order to attend school in the state of Iowa.

The change requires a one-time dose of **meningococcal (A, C, W, Y) vaccine received on or after 10 years of age for applicants in grades 7 and above**, if born after September 15, 2004; **and 2 doses of meningococcal (A, C, W, Y) vaccines for applicants in grade 12**, if born after September 15, 1999; or 1 dose if received when applicants are 16 years of age or older. This aligns with the recommendations by the national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.



- **One dose of meningococcal vaccine before seventh grade.** If a student had the first dose as a sixth grader, then another dose is not required until grade 12.
- **A total of two doses are required before grade 12.** Most students entering grade 12 received their first dose when they were younger and will be due for their second dose, or booster. This booster is needed because protection from the vaccine decreases over time.
- The **only teens that will NOT** need a second dose before grade 12 are those who received their first dose on or after their 16th birthday.

Parents are encouraged to check with their children's physicians prior to the start of the new school year to determine when or if they need to be vaccinated. A valid Certificate of Immunization with the new meningococcal vaccine will need to be submitted to the school the child is enrolling or attempting to enroll. If you do not have insurance or your insurance does not pay for vaccines, contact Dallas County Public Health at 515-993-3750 or 515-465-2483.

Meningococcal disease is a severe bacterial infection that can lead to meningitis (inflammation of the lining covering the brain and spinal cord) and bloodstream infections such as septicemia. Symptoms of the disease include a high fever, headache, vomiting, a stiff neck and a rash. Those who contract the disease may experience permanent brain damage, hearing loss, kidney failure, loss of arms or legs, or chronic nervous system problems.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found the highest rates of meningococcal disease to be among preteens, teens, and young adults, as well as among infants with certain medical conditions. The new law targets many in this age group and aligns with the CDC's recommendation to vaccinate 11- to 18-year-olds against meningococcal disease.

To learn more about meningitis and how to prevent it visit www.dallascountyiowa.gov/publichealth