

Meningococcal Secondary School Vaccine Requirement Questions and Answers January 2017

Q: What grades are included in the new meningococcal vaccine requirement?

A: For the 2017-2018 school year, and all future school years, all students entering, advancing or transferring into 7th grade and born after September 15, 2004, will need proof of one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY). All students entering, advancing, or transferring into 12th grade and born after September 15, 1999, will need proof of two doses of meningococcal (A, C W, Y) vaccine; or 1 dose if received when the student was 16 years of age or older.

Q: What is meningitis and what are the diseases the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) prevents?

A: Meningitis vaccine protect against meningococcal serogroups A, C, W, and Y. Meningococcal disease caused by any serogroup is very serious, life-threatening illness. It is caused by bacteria that can infect the blood, brain, and spinal cord. Meningococcal bacteria are spread through upper respiratory droplets, such as saliva (kissing, living in close quarters). About 10 to 15% of people with meningococcal disease die even with appropriate treatment. Of those who recover, up to 20% suffer from serious after-effects, such as permanent hearing loss, limb loss, or brain damage. Meningococcal vaccines are very safe and effective at preventing meningococcal disease. The meningococcal vaccine is 85 - 100 percent effective at preventing infection from the subtypes of meningococcus found in the vaccine.

Q: Do ALL 7th grade students that are born after September 15, 2004, need to receive the meningitis (A, C W, Y) vaccine?

A: Yes, students will need one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine unless the student has a Certificate of Immunization Exemption. This includes current students, new students and transfer students in both public and private schools. Many students have already received the vaccine and simply need to submit a new Certificate of Immunization to the school documenting they have received the meningococcal vaccine.

Q: Do ALL 12th grade students that are born after September 15, 1999, need to receive two-doses the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY)?

A: Yes, students will need two doses of vaccine. If the student received the first dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) at 16 years of age or older, only one dose is required. This includes current students, new students and transfer students in both public and private schools. Many students have already received the vaccine and simply need to submit a new Certificate of Immunization to the school documenting they have received the meningococcal vaccines.

Q: Does this meningococcal requirement include meningitis B (MenB) vaccine?

A: No. The meningococcal vaccine requirement is only for meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY). Meningococcal serogroup B vaccines (MenB) do not provide protection against serogroup A, C, W, or Y disease. MenB vaccine does not meet the meningococcal vaccine requirement.

Q: If a student received the first dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) at 15 years of age, how soon can the second dose be administered?

A: If the first dose is given at age 13 through 15 years, a booster dose can be administered as early as age 16 years, with a minimum interval of 8 weeks from the previous dose.

Q: Why does the new requirement include the September 15, 2004 date of birth?

A: The September 15, 2004 date of birth allows for the meningococcal vaccine requirement to be phased in rather than requiring vaccine for all children in 7th through 12th grades.

Q: Will all students born after September 15, 2004 need to have proof of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) or just 7th graders; the wording makes it sound as if perhaps it will be for grades 7-12?

A: The meningococcal requirement has two parts.

- For the 2017-18 school year, only students entering grades 7 and above, who were born after September 15, 2004, will be required to receive meningococcal vaccine. If a student is entering 8th through 11th grades next year, they were generally born prior to September 15, 2004, therefore would not be affected by this requirement. Likewise, if a student entering 7th grade in 2017-2018 was born *before* September 15, 2004, s/he will not be affected by this requirement.
- For the 2017-18 school year, students entering 12th grade, who were born after September 15, 1999, will need proof of two doses of meningococcal (A, C W, Y) vaccine; or 1 dose if received when the student was 16 years of age or older.

Q: Why is the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) required?

A: The requirement concludes the administrative rule making process to implement the meningococcal vaccine requirement which passed during the 2016 legislative session. The meningococcal secondary school vaccine requirement will help Iowa achieve and maintain high adolescent vaccine coverage levels, protecting the health of adolescents, friends, families, and communities. Adolescents are likely the main source of transmission for meningococcal disease.

Q: Why does my child need meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY)?

A: In addition to it being a new requirement for school, children who receive the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) vaccine will be better protected during their school years. Immunizations also help protect others within the home, in the community, and at school. About 10 to 15% of people with meningococcal disease die even with appropriate treatment. Of those who recover, up to 20% suffer from serious after-effects, such as permanent hearing loss, limb loss, or brain damage. Meningococcal vaccines are very safe and effective at preventing meningococcal disease.

Q: When should my child get vaccinated with meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY)?

A: ACIP recommends people age 11 or 12 years be routinely vaccinated with quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) and receive a booster dose at age 16 years. Adolescents who receive the first dose at age 13 through 15 years should receive a one-time booster dose, preferably at age 16 through 18 years. Teens who receive their first dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine at or after age 16 years do not need a booster dose of vaccine to comply with the requirement.

Q: Should all adolescents receive a routine booster dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY)?

A: Adolescents who receive the first dose at age 13 through 15 years should receive a one-time booster dose, preferably at age 16 through 18 years. Teens who receive their first dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine at or after age 16 years do not need a booster dose of vaccine to comply with the requirement.

Q: If someone received meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine (MPSV4) at age 5 years (such as for international travel) and a dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) at age 11 or 12 years, will they still need a booster dose of MenACWY vaccine at age 16 years?

A: Yes. Any meningococcal vaccination given prior to the tenth birthday (either with MenACWY or MPSV4) does NOT meet the meningococcal vaccine requirement.

Q: If a student already has a valid Medical or Religious Certificate of Exemption on file, will s/he need an updated certificate of exemption form filled out for the 7th and 12th grade meningococcal vaccine requirement?

A: If a Certificate of Medical Exemption is for a specific vaccine(s), not including meningitis vaccine, then yes, s/he would need a new Certificate of Medical Exemption form filled out to include meningococcal vaccine. If a medical exemption form has no specific vaccines listed, then it is a valid certificate of exemption for all vaccines and remains valid for the student's entire enrollment period in an Iowa licensed childcare, elementary and secondary school.

If a student has a religious certificate of immunization previously completed it is valid for the meningococcal vaccine requirement and a new certificate does not need to be submitted.

Q: What if my child does not have proof of the meningitis vaccine before school starts?

A: A Certificate of Immunization that includes the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) must be submitted to the school the child is enrolled or attempting to enroll. Children that have received one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) may attend school by submitting a Provisional Certificate of Immunization. The Provisional Certificate of Immunization is valid for a maximum of 60 days which allows time for the child to receive the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY). If the child does not receive the vaccine by the end of the provisional enrollment period (60 days), the child will be excluded from school.

Q: Can students in 7th who have not received a meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY), be placed on a provisional?

A: No, there is no grace/extension period for the implementation of this requirement. All 7th grade students born after September 15, 2004, will need to submit a completed Certificate of Immunization with the meningococcal conjugate vaccination (MenACWY). A Provisional Certificate of Immunization can only be issued when the applicant has received at least one dose of the required vaccine.

Q: Is there a grace period/extension to receive the meningococcal vaccine AFTER school starts?

A: No, there is no grace/extension period for the implementation of this requirement. All 7th grade students born after September 15, 2004, will need to submit a completed Certificate of Immunization with the meningococcal conjugate vaccination (MenACWY), or a Certificate of Immunization Exemption before enrolling in school.

All 12th grade students born after September 15, 1999, will need to submit a completed Certificate of Immunization with the meningococcal conjugate vaccination (MenACWY), a Certificate of Provisional Enrollment or a Certificate of Immunization Exemption before enrolling in school.

Q: How long does it take for the meningococcal conjugate vaccination (MenACWY) to provide protection?

A: As soon as the vaccine is given you start building protection. Full protection is generally reached within 2 weeks.

Q: Will the Certificate of Immunization be updated to reflect the new requirement?

A: The second page of the Certificate of Immunization, Immunization requirements section, will be updated to include the new requirements. The new version of the Certificate of Immunization will be printed and made available to order from the Iowa Department of Public Health, Immunization Program webpage. Certificates can ordered on the Immunization Program webpage at <https://www.idph.iowa.gov/immtb/immunization/forms>. The Certificate of Immunization will also be updated in the Immunization Registry Information System (IRIS).

Q: Are old versions of the Certificate of Immunization valid or do all students need to be updated with a new certificate?

A: Previous versions of the Certificate of Immunization remain valid and student records do not need to be updated to the current version. Healthcare providers may continue to use existing supplies of the Certificate of Immunization and then reorder the new document once supplies are depleted. Previous versions of the Certificate of Immunization included space to document meningococcal vaccine.

Q: When school nurses and Local Public Health Agencies (LPHAs) review student records for enrollment in 7th and 12th grades, do all of the previously reviewed vaccines need to be reviewed again?

A: No, previously reviewed Certificates of Immunization and associated vaccines do not need to be reviewed again. Routinely when Local Public Health Agencies (LPHAs) review student records, the certificate is marked to indicate the record has been reviewed. When this has occurred the reviewer only needs to evaluate the record for compliance with the new meningococcal vaccine requirement.