



HEALTH ADVISORY #120

Meningococcal B Meningitis Cases Identified in West Virginia

TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Hospitals and other Healthcare Facilities

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DATE: 05-18-2016

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, INFECTION CONTROL PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

OTHER RECIPIENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

CASES: As of May 18, 2016, there have been two (2) recent cases of meningococcal serotype B meningitis identified in West Virginia. Healthcare providers around the state need to be vigilant regarding suspect cases of meningitis in their area. Meningococcal B meningitis is a serious, life-threatening illness that can be prevented through the use of vaccines.

Although meningitis vaccines are required for 7th and 12th grade students for compulsory immunizations, these vaccines only cover meningococcal serotypes A, C, W, and Y (MCV4). There is a vaccine available for prevention of meningococcal serotype B, although it is not required for school entry and not included in the MCV4 vaccine. Healthcare providers are encouraged to make meningococcal serogroup B vaccine available to adolescents and young adults aged 16 through 23 years.

ASSESSMENT: Symptoms of acute meningococcal meningitis are commonly preceded by upper respiratory tract symptoms (nasal congestion, low grade fever, and/or rhinorrhea). Other symptoms include: headache, irritability, nausea, nuchal rigidity (stiff neck), lethargy, photophobia, vomiting, fever and altered mental status (confusion).

Meningococcal meningitis is a rare disease, but all cases are potentially life-threatening. Timely diagnosis and treatment of meningococcal meningitis is imperative to improving the outcome for the patient as well as providing prophylaxis to close contacts in preventing the rapid spread of meningococcal disease. There are 50 to 60 cases and 5 to 10 deaths from meningococcal disease serogroup B every year in the United States; most of these in persons aged 16 through 23 years.

RESOURCES/QUESTIONS: For additional information on vaccination requirements and recommendations, visit the Division of Immunization Services website at <http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/immunization> or call (304) 558-2188. For questions regarding meningococcal disease, contact the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at (304) 558-5358, extension 1.

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