TO: CDPH IZ Coordinators
FROM: CDPH
SUBJECT: Protecting against meningococcal disease – immunization and beyond
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Protecting against meningococcal disease – immunization and beyond

Most vaccines are very effective at preventing dangerous and sometimes deadly diseases; however, no vaccine is 100% effective. Meningococcal disease is a serious disease that warrants careful clinical vigilance in addition to preventive vaccination.

Meningococcal Disease
Meningococcal disease is an acute, potentially fatal illness. Most invasive meningococcal disease is caused by five serogroups (A, B, C, Y, W-135). The current U.S. vaccine protects against serogroups A, C, Y, and W-135. It does not protect against serogroup B. Approximately 30% of all meningococcal disease cases in California are caused by serogroup B.

Protect your patients from meningococcal disease:
- Immunize them to help prevent disease
- Remain alert for symptoms, even after immunization

Even if a patient has been vaccinated:
- Test for meningococcal disease when it is suspected
- Offer antibiotic prophylaxis (PEP) after an exposure

Quiz
Your 16-year old patient returns home from summer camp, where a bunkmate was sent to the hospital for invasive meningococcal disease. You proceed to: (select all that apply)
- A. Monitor the patient for illness. Advise the family to watch patient closely for symptoms such as fever, aches, chills and rash for at least 10 days since last exposure to the ill bunkmate.
- B. Review the patient’s immunization status, and, if not yet received, immunize the patient with quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine; two doses are recommended, the first at 11 or 12 years of age, with a booster dose at age 16.
- C. Offer the patient a brief course of an appropriate antibiotic to further reduce the risk of contracting meningococcal disease.
- D. If the patient was previously immunized, reassure the patient and family that antibiotic prophylaxis is not needed.

Quiz Answers:
A, B, and C are correct.
D is incorrect. Close contacts of people with invasive meningococcal disease are at risk of becoming ill and should receive appropriate antibiotic prophylaxis regardless of prior
immunization. Current meningococcal conjugate vaccines are not designed to protect against serogroup B meningococcus, associated with 30% of cases in California.

While vaccines are not 100% effective, they are the best protection we have against dangerous diseases like meningococcal disease. Protect your patients, keep them immunized.