



# East Valley School District No. 361

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

All schools in Washington are required to provide information on **Meningococcal disease** and **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)** to parents or guardians of all students entering grades 6-12.

**Meningococcal disease** is a serious infection of the brain (meningitis) and blood caused by bacteria. Symptoms may include high fever and chills, stiff neck, headache, sensitivity to light, vomiting, and sometimes a rash, coma, and seizures. Fortunately, this life-threatening infection is rare -- about 75 people are infected each year in Washington. Adolescents and young adults are most likely to get meningococcal disease, especially those living in group settings, such as college dorms or who spend time with others in close quarters.

The Department of Health wants you to be aware of meningococcal disease and how you can protect your child against it. A vaccine is available that can prevent up to 65 percent of meningococcal disease among adolescents and young adults. The vaccine is recommended for all children age 11-12 years. It is also recommended for unvaccinated teens age 15 years and college freshmen who will be living in a dorm. **The meningococcal vaccine is not required for school or college attendance.**

Here are some other ways to prevent the spread of meningococcal disease:

- Practice good hygiene (regular hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, etc.)
- Do not share items that may spread meningococcal disease and other bacteria and viruses, such as eating utensils, glasses, cups, water bottles, drinks, lip gloss or toothbrushes.

**Human Papillomavirus (HPV)** is a very common virus that is spread through genital contact. At least 50 percent of sexually active people will get HPV at some time in their lives. There are many types of HPV. Some types can cause cervical cancer or genital warts. Both women and men can get HPV and easily spread it to others without knowing they have it. Most people with HPV have no signs or symptoms. Some people know they have HPV because they have a symptom like genital warts.

The best way to prevent HPV infection is to abstain from all sexual activity. There is also a vaccine that is a very effective way to prevent four types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer and genital warts. The vaccine does not protect against all types of HPV or other sexually transmitted infections. The vaccine also does not protect against any type of HPV that someone already has. Current studies show that HPV vaccine protection lasts up to 5 years.

The Federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends the HPV vaccine for all girls age 11-12 years. The vaccine can also be given to females as young as nine and up to 26 years, if their doctor recommends it. HPV vaccine is given as a series of three shots over a six month period. The vaccine is not currently recommended for boys or men. The HPV vaccine is a preventive vaccine and will offer the best protection if given before sexual activity starts. **HPV vaccine is not required for school entry in Washington.**

We encourage you to learn more about **meningococcal disease** and **HPV** and how to prevent them. Discuss these conditions with your physician or health care provider and find out if the immunizations available would be beneficial for your child. Immunizations are also available at the Spokane Regional Health District.

More information is available on the following web sites:

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

Meningococcal vaccine information: [www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/vis/vis-mening.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/vis/vis-mening.pdf)

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/std/hpv](http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv)