

Rising 11th Graders

Dear Parents or Guardians,

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial illness that affects the brain and the spinal cord in the form of meningitis, and the bloodstream in the form of septicemia. It can cause shock, coma, and death within hours of the first symptoms.

To help protect your children and others from meningococcal disease, Georgia law will soon require students be vaccinated against this disease unless the child has an exemption on file at the school.

Effective July 1, 2020, children 16 years of age and older who are entering the 11th grade (including new entrants) must have received one booster dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4), unless their initial dose was administered on or after their 16th birthday.

If students have not been vaccinated against meningococcal disease, we strongly recommend they visit their doctor or health care provider to get their MCV4 booster shot. Getting MCV4 now will not only help protect students against the ongoing threat of meningitis but will also meet the **new school entry requirement**.

Ask your pediatrician or local health department about other shots your child may need including:

- *the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine series
- *the tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis vaccine (Tdap or Td booster)
- *an annual flu vaccine
- *catch-up immunizations, including chickenpox, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and hepatitis B.

Proof of vaccinations must be documented on the Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231).

If your child does not have health insurance or their health plan won't cover these vaccines, call your local health department and ask about getting no or low cost vaccines. Jackson County Health Department: Jefferson location 706-367-5204 or Commerce location 706-335-3895. For more information you may visit <http://dph.georgia.gov/vaccines-children> or call 800-848-3868.



