

**2012 Risk Information**  
**FAQs: Meningitis in Crook County (updated March 19, 2012)**

**What is going on?** Prineville is experiencing an outbreak of meningococcal disease. This has led to an expanded recommendation for meningococcal vaccine to include persons 9 months through 25 years of age who live, work, attend school or daycare in the Prineville area.

**What is meningococcal disease?** Meningococcal is a very rare disease caused by bacteria that can sometimes lead to serious illness. In rare cases, complications from meningococcal disease could include brain damage, deafness, paralysis and loss of digits or limbs. About 10 percent of the cases are fatal.

**Is meningococcal disease easy to catch?** No. Meningococcal disease is *not* easily transmittable. It is a very rare disease, generally striking less than 1 person out of every 100,000 per year.

**Who gets meningococcal disease?** The disease mostly affects adolescents and young adults. In Prineville during the last year, most of the six cases have been people under the age of 25.

**What can I do to protect myself from getting meningococcal disease?** The best way to prevent meningococcal disease is by vaccination. Other ways to lower the risk of infection is by washing your hands, not smoking, and not sharing cigarettes or eating and drinking utensils.

**What is the danger of smoking?** Smoking or being exposed to others' cigarette smoke appears to increase the risk of meningococcal significantly.

**Who should get vaccinated?** In general, adolescents ages 11 through 18 and college students living in dorms should be vaccinated. During the outbreak, public health officials have expanded the vaccination recommendation to include people ages 9 months through 25 years who live, work, or attend school or day care in greater Prineville get a meningococcal vaccination.

**Where can I get vaccinated?** If you have health care coverage, either private insurance or through the Oregon Health Plan, you should call your health care provider or pharmacist. In Prineville, the following pharmacies are providing meningococcal vaccine- Bi-Mart, Clinic & Rite Aid.

**I don't have insurance. Can I still get a vaccination?** Yes. You can purchase a vaccination at local pharmacies or clinics for about \$160 - \$200. If you can't afford to purchase a vaccine, people without insurance (or those whose insurance doesn't cover meningococcal vaccine) can receive vaccine at walk-in clinics on Mondays at the Crook County Health Department, 375 NE Beaver St, Prineville between the hours 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. No appointments needed.

Uninsured, Medicaid enrolled, and American Indian/Alaska Native children ages 9 months through 18 years are eligible for federally funded vaccine through the Vaccines for Children program during the outbreak.

**My child had a meningococcal vaccination a few years ago. Does he need another?**

Usually, adolescents get a booster vaccine about five years after their first one. Check with your health care provider to see if your child is due for a booster.

**Can I take my child to the pharmacy for a meningococcal vaccine?** Yes, but children under age 11 need a physician's prescription to be vaccinated by a pharmacist.

**My son is on a sports team that is coming to Prineville. Should I keep him at home?**

Children should be immunized at age 11 or 12, however this vaccine is not required for school. Check your child's immunization record or check with your health care provider to make sure he has received his meningococcal vaccine.

**What are the risks from the meningococcal vaccines?**

A vaccine, like another other medicine, could possibly cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of meningococcal vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small. Common mild reactions include redness or pain where the shot was given. A small percentage of people who receive the vaccine develop a mild fever. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, weakness, hoarseness/wheezing, a fast heartbeat, hives, dizziness, paleness or swelling of the throat. If any of these symptoms occurs, call a doctor immediately or get to the doctor immediately.