



News Release
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SLVHD Medical Officer Signs Standing Order
Order recommends routine Menactra vaccination for 7th graders

(Salt Lake County) – While the Menactra vaccine, used to prevent meningococcal disease, is not currently required by law in Utah, Dr. Dagmar Vitek, Medical Officer for the Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) has issued a Standing Order to health department staff recommending routine vaccination of pre-teens (beginning at 11 years of age) with the Menactra (MCV4) vaccine. The Standing Order comes after a similar recommendation* by the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

“In Utah, students are required to receive updates or ‘booster shots’ on some of their immunizations before entering 7th grade, so receiving the Menactra at that time fits right in,” Vitek explains. “This is also a good time to receive the Menactra because the risk of getting meningococcal disease increases dramatically in teenagers and college students.”

In fact, teenagers and college students account for nearly 30 percent of all cases of reported meningococcal infection in the United States. The good news is that up to 83 percent of meningococcal disease cases among teenagers and college students can be prevented through immunization.

Over the past few years, Salt Lake County has seen the meningococcal disease cause death in several local high school students.

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial infection that can cause meningitis—severe swelling of the brain and spinal cord, or can lead to sepsis—a dangerous and potentially life-threatening blood infection. It is very dangerous because it often begins with symptoms that can be mistaken for other illnesses such as the flu. However, unlike more common infections, meningococcal disease can worsen very rapidly.

Medical and health facilities or organizations use Standing Orders to authorize nurses and other non-physician staff to administer vaccinations according to an institution- or physician-approved protocol without a physician's exam. CDC research shows that standing orders programs are an effective intervention to improve vaccination coverage rates.

Menactra is recommended for individuals 11 to 55 years of age and is available at the following SLVHD Health Clinics:

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South East Public Health Center
9340 South 700 East
Sandy, UT 84070
255-7114

Ellis R. Shipp Public Health Center
4535 South 5600 West
West Valley City, UT 84120
963-7335

South Main Public Health Center
3195 South Main Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84115
483-5451

Salt Lake City Public Health Center
610 south 200 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
534-4568

For additional information on the availability of Menactra vaccine and vaccination guidelines, call (801) 468-2086.

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**ACIP recommends routine vaccination of young adolescents (defined in this report as persons aged 11--12 years) with MCV4 at the preadolescent health-care visit (at age 11--12 years).*