



8811 Sunfish Run Road, Randolph, NY 14772

Dear Parent,

I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis, and a new law in New York State. On July 22, 2003, the New York State Public Health Law (NYS PHL) was amended to include §2167 requiring overnight children's camps to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to the parents or guardians of all campers who attend camp for 7 or more nights. This law became effective on August 15, 2003.

Camp Li-Lo-Li is required to maintain a record of the following for each camper:

- A response to receipt of meningococcal meningitis disease and vaccine information signed by the camper's parent or guardian; AND
- Information on the availability and cost of meningococcal meningitis vaccine (Menomune™); AND EITHER
- A record of meningococcal meningitis immunization within the past 10 years; OR
- An acknowledgement of meningococcal meningitis disease risks and refusal of meningococcal meningitis immunization signed by the camper's parent or guardian.

Meningitis is rare. However, when it strikes, its flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult. If not treated early, meningitis can lead to swelling of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal column as well as severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, limb amputation and even death.

Cases of meningitis among teens and young adults 15 to 24 years of age have more than doubled since 1991. The disease strikes about 3,000 Americans each year and claims about 300 lives.

In February 2005, the CDC (Center for Disease Control) recommended a new vaccine, known as Menactra™ for use to prevent meningococcal disease. The previous version of this vaccine was Menomune™. Both vaccines are 85 to 100% effective in preventing the 4 kinds of meningococcal germ (types A,C,Y,W-135). These 4 types cause about 70% of the disease in the US. Because the vaccine does not include type B, which accounts for about one-third of cases in adolescents, it does not prevent all cases of meningococcal disease.

Information about the availability and cost of the vaccine can be obtained from your health care provider and by visiting the manufacturer's website at [www.meningitisvaccine.com](http://www.meningitisvaccine.com). Camp Li-Lo-Li will not be offering the vaccine.

I encourage you to carefully review the enclosed materials. **Please complete the Meningococcal Vaccination Response Form on the back of this letter and return it in the enclosed envelope.**

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, please consult your child's physician. You can also find information about the disease at the New York State Department of Health website: [www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us) and [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseasinfo](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseasinfo).

Sincerely,

Sarah Brooks  
Camp Li-Lo-Li  
Camp Health Director

# MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS VACCINATION RESPONSE FORM

New York State Public Health Law requires the operator of an overnight children's camp to maintain a completed response form for every camper who attends camp for seven (7) or more nights.

**Check one box and sign below.**

My child has had the meningococcal meningitis immunization (Menomune™) within the past 10 years.

Date received \_\_\_\_\_

[Note: If your child received the meningococcal vaccine available before February 25, 2005 called Menomune™, please note this vaccine's protection lasts for approximately 3 to 5 years. Revaccination with the new conjugate vaccine called Menactra™ should be considered within 3 to 5 years after receiving Menomune™.]

I have read, or have had explained to me, the information regarding meningococcal meningitis disease. I understand the risks of not receiving the vaccine.

I have decided that my child will **not** obtain immunization against meningococcal meningitis disease.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Please initial here.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Camper's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's email address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Meningococcal Disease

### What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is a severe bacterial infection of the bloodstream or meninges (a thin lining covering the brain and spinal cord) caused by the meningococcus germ.

### Who gets meningococcal disease?

Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but it is more common in infants and children. For some adolescents, such as first year college students living in dormitories, there is an increased risk of meningococcal disease. Every year in the United States approximately 2,500 people are infected and 300 die from the disease. Other persons at increased risk include household contacts of a person known to have had this disease, immunocompromised people, and people traveling to parts of the world where meningococcal meningitis is prevalent.

### How is the meningococcus germ spread?

The meningococcus germ is spread by direct close contact with nose or throat discharges of an infected person.

### What are the symptoms?

High fever, headache, vomiting, stiff neck and a rash are symptoms of meningococcal disease. Among people who develop meningococcal disease, 10-15% die, in spite of treatment with antibiotics. Of those who live, permanent brain damage, hearing loss, kidney failure, loss of arms or legs, or chronic nervous system problems can occur. The symptoms may appear 2 to 10 days after exposure, but usually within 5 days.

### What is the treatment for meningococcal disease?

Antibiotics, such as penicillin G or ceftriaxone, can be used to treat people with meningococcal disease.

### Should people who have been in contact with a diagnosed case of meningococcal meningitis be treated?

Only people who have been in close contact (household members, intimate contacts, health care personnel performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, day care center playmates, etc.) need to be considered for preventive treatment. Such people are usually advised to obtain a prescription for a special antibiotic (either rifampin, ciprofloxacin or ceftriaxone) from their physician. Casual contact as might occur in a regular classroom, office or factory setting is not usually significant enough to cause concern.

### Is there a vaccine to prevent meningococcal meningitis?

In February 2005, the CDC recommended a new vaccine, known as Menactra™, for use to prevent meningococcal disease. The previous version of this vaccine, Menomune™, was first available in the United States in 1985. Both vaccines are 85% to 100% effective in preventing the 4 kinds of the meningococcus germ (types A, C, Y, W-135). These 4 types cause about 70% of the disease in the United States. Because the vaccine does not include type B, which accounts for about one-third of cases in adolescents, it does not prevent all cases of meningococcal disease.

### Is the vaccine safe? Are there adverse side effects to the vaccine?

Both vaccines are currently available and both are safe and effective vaccines. However, both vaccines may cause mild and infrequent side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days.

### Who should get the meningococcal vaccine?

The vaccine is recommended for all adolescents entering middle school (11-12 years old) and high school (15 years old) and all first year college students living in dormitories. Also at increased risk are people with terminal complement deficiencies or asplenia, some laboratory workers and travelers to endemic areas of the world. However, the vaccine will benefit all teenagers and young adults in the United States.

### What is the duration of protection from the vaccine?

Menomune™, the older version, requires booster doses every 3 to 5 years. Although research is still pending, the new vaccine, Menactra™, will probably not require booster doses. As with any vaccine, vaccination against meningitis may not protect 100% of all susceptible individuals.

### How do I get more information about meningococcal disease and vaccination?

Contact your family physician or your student health service. Additional information is also available on the websites of the New York State Department of Health, [www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us); the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/ncid/dbmd/diseaseinfo](http://www.cdc.gov/ncid/dbmd/diseaseinfo); and the American College Health Association, [www.acha.org](http://www.acha.org).