



Onondaga County Health Department

Joanne M. Mahoney, County Executive
Indu Gupta, MD, MPH, Commissioner of Health

John H. Mulroy Civic Center · 421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY 13202



August 2019

Dear Colleague:

With the new school year right around the corner, the Onondaga County Health Department (OCHD) is updating our annual back-to-school resources. **This year, the resources have been posted on the school nurse page on our website at <http://www.ongov.net/health/schools.html>.** You will find updated information about a number of important school health topics at this site. The posted materials can be printed and distributed to teachers, staff, students, parents and /or guardians. We hope this information will be helpful to you throughout the academic year.

1. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Changes to Immunization Required for School Entrance/Attendance: In 2019-2020 school year, the meningococcal vaccine will be required for 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 12th grades. One dose is required for 7th grade (with a catch-up dose in 8th, 9th or 10th if the student did not get it in 7th grade). Two doses are required for 12th grade, unless the first dose was given after 16 years of age. All other vaccination requirements remain the same.

Removal of Non-Medical Exemptions: On June 13, 2019, legislation was signed removing non-medical exemptions from school vaccination requirements for children. This legislation applies to public, private and parochial schools for students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Students who previously held a religious exemption will have 14 days from the first day of school to have received the first doses of any needed vaccines. Within 30 days of the first day of school, parents and guardians must show that they have scheduled appointments for all required follow-up doses. As a reminder, medical exemptions from vaccine requirements are still allowed, and must be renewed yearly. Visit the link above to review the fact sheet entitled "Frequently Asked Questions about Legislation Removing Non-Medical Exemptions from School Vaccination Requirements".

OCHD Immunization Clinic: For those without insurance, the OCHD immunization clinic offers all vaccines needed for school entrance. The clinic is located at the John H. Mulroy Civic Center, 421 Montgomery St., Room 30 (Basement level) in Syracuse. The clinic is open Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon. A parent or guardian must accompany children under the age of 18 and they must bring the child's shot records. If you exclude a student from school because of missing vaccinations, please attach a copy of the student's shot record to the referral letter to the immunization clinic. **Students with private insurance should be referred to their health care provider, the OCHD clinic cannot serve these students.**

Please note, the administrative fees for OCHD Immunization Clinic has changed. The fee is \$25.00 per child for one vaccine, and \$30.00 per child for more than one vaccine. A sliding fee scale is available. Inability to pay is not a barrier to care. **Please utilize the latest OCHD Immunization Clinic flyer posted at the link above when sharing information with parents so the correct fee is noted.**

The Onondaga County Health Department now has select vaccines available for adults with no insurance or whose insurance does not cover vaccines. Please contact the OCHD immunization program at (315)435-2000 for more information on this program

2. ILLNESSES THAT MAY IMPACT SCHOOL HEALTH

Mumps: If students present with swollen parotid glands, have them seek medical care immediately. If mumps is suspected, report the case to the OCHD Bureau of Disease Control (315)435-3236, and the student should stay out of school for five days from the onset of parotid swelling.

Measles: Measles is a very contagious viral illness, and can be transmitted even before a rash appears. In the current measles outbreaks in New York City and nearby counties since September 2018, cases are occurring mostly among unvaccinated or under-vaccinated Orthodox Jews, particularly children. The number of new cases has been decreasing in July 2019 but the outbreaks are yet to be declared over. If you suspect a case of measles, please isolate the sick individual in a room with a closed door, and seek health care immediately. Promptly call the OCHD Bureau of Disease Control (315)435-3236 to phone in a report.

Meningococcal Meningitis: Although meningococcal meningitis is very rare, it strikes quickly and can lead to serious complications including death. Symptoms appear suddenly and may include a high fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea and vomiting, petechiae or purpura, and photophobia. Isolate the patient and seek medical care immediately. The single best way to prevent the disease is with vaccination. The current school recommendations require MenACWY vaccine, however teens and young adults can also be vaccinated against the B strain to increase their protection from this disease.

Norovirus: Norovirus is a very contagious virus that causes vomiting and diarrhea. Norovirus spreads through contaminated food or drinks, and by ingesting tiny particles of fecal or vomit matter from an infected person. The virus can also be transmitted by touching contaminated surfaces and then put your fingers in your mouth. Even though norovirus is not a reportable disease, you have to report an outbreak that happens in the school setting to OCHD so we can collaborate with you to implement control measures such as investigation, mitigation, and effective environment sanitation.

Pertussis: The key to preventing pertussis is the expanded use of Tdap vaccine, as recommended by the Advisory County on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Adult staff and faculty are strongly encouraged to get a Tdap dose if they have not yet received a pertussis vaccine, regardless of time since last tetanus (Td) vaccine. Pregnant staff/students should receive one dose of Tdap in the 3rd trimester of each pregnancy.

Seasonal Influenza: Everyone should get flu vaccine every year. Both inactivated influenza vaccine and live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) will again be options for vaccination. The ACIP has given no preference for any vaccine. Please encourage staff, faculty and students to get flu vaccine as early as possible.

Flu Vaccine Offered at OCHD Immunization Clinic. OCHD will offer flu vaccines at its immunization clinic (see previous details), once vaccine becomes available. Please call (315)435-2000 for availability of vaccine.

Mosquito and Tick-borne Diseases: West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus (EEEV) are transmitted by human biting mosquitos that are present in our area. The threat of WNV and EEEV persists until the hard frost in late October that kills all mosquitos. OCHD traps and tests mosquito pools for WNV and EEEV every week during the mosquito season and posts these results on our website. If students and staff attend sports or outdoor events in late afternoon or evening, please advise them to use proper protection against mosquito bites (long sleeve shirts and pants, careful use of insect repellents).

Lyme Disease (LD) bacterium is found in half of the black-legged deer ticks in our county. Please advise students and staff to take precautions to protect themselves against ticks (light clothing, tick spray, stay away from bushy areas, and check body for ticks after outdoor outings/nature walks). Removal of an embedded tick

before 36 hours will greatly decrease the risk of getting LD. LD is a preventable and treatable disease, but the best defense is to avoid the tick bite.

I hope that you find these materials useful as you start the new school year. For immunization questions, please contact a health department immunization nurse at (315)435-2000. To report Communicable Diseases or cluster of illnesses, please call Bureau of Disease Control at (315)435-3236. If you have any other questions or are unable to access our online resources, please contact the Onondaga County Immunization Program at (315)435-2000. Best wishes for a healthy school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Quoc V. Nguyen', written in a cursive style.

Quoc V. Nguyen, MD
Medical Director