

Health Unit Media Release

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FREE MENINGITIS-C VACCINE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

During the months of May and June the Health Unit will be offering free Meningitis-C vaccine in high schools to all students born between 1985 and 1991.

Meningitis is a serious infection of the lining of the brain or spinal cord. The bacteria that cause Meningitis live in the back of the nose and throat. **Bacteria from the saliva of an infected person can be spread through kissing or when common items are shared like drinks, water bottles, straws, cigarettes, toothbrushes or lip-gloss.**

The vaccine, which is between 92% and 97% effective, provides protection against the type of Meningitis that is called "Group C". This group of bacteria has been almost exclusively responsible for outbreaks in schools and communities. As many of these cases of Meningitis are in adolescents and young adults, post-secondary institutions are starting to require that students living in residence be vaccinated.

Students will be provided with an information package with a consent form from their school. Students and parents are encouraged to review this information package.

According to the Health Care Consent Act, students may sign their own consent. For a copy of this Act visit: www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/english/96h02_e.htm.

Students who are unable to attend their high school clinic can receive the vaccine by:

- ✓ Scheduling an appointment with their Health Care Provider.
- ✓ Scheduling an appointment with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit.

If you have any questions regarding the Meningitis-C vaccine, please feel free to contact our Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at (613) 345-5685 or 1-800-660-5853. For copies of the student information package please visit www.healthunit.org.

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