

Spring 2014

Dear Children's Camp Operator:

The purpose of this letter is to discuss vaccine-preventable diseases and vaccination in the camp setting. There has been an increase in the number of cases of vaccine-preventable diseases in the United States over the last several years, many of which have been linked to foreign travel or spread through children's summer camps.

There is also a growing presence of international staff working at summer camps in New York State. These individuals provide a valuable contribution and enhance the camping experience. However, they may also introduce vaccine-preventable diseases that are endemic in their country of origin.

The best protection against vaccine-preventable diseases is broad vaccination coverage. Therefore, **vaccination of all individuals who will be working in or attending summer camps is recommended.**

This letter will discuss how to report a vaccine-preventable disease to the local health department, and which vaccines are recommended for both campers and staff.

#### **REPORTING DETAILS**

- Most vaccine-preventable diseases are reportable by law, and often even one case is considered an outbreak.
- The camp health director or other healthcare provider should discuss with staff the symptoms of vaccine-preventable diseases. The need to **report the first sign of illness** to the director should be stressed.
- If one of these diseases is suspected in even one camper or camp employee, your local health department (LHD) should be notified **immediately**. **Delays in reporting have led to large outbreaks at camps.**
- If you or your health director are considering the diagnosis of a vaccine-preventable disease and are ordering testing, then you should report the case to the LHD at that time.
- By notifying the LHD, as required, the LHD can facilitate obtaining rapid test results and institution of control measures, if indicated.
- Camp operators must also report to the permit-issuing official.
- Medical providers should refer to New York State Department of Health Communicable Disease Reporting Requirements for reporting instructions, available at:  
<http://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/diseases/reporting/communicable/>.

#### **RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATIONS FOR CAMPERS**

- The part of the State Sanitary Code that applies to campers is Subpart 7-2, which requires that the camp maintain immunization records for all campers. It does not, however, specify which vaccines are required for camp attendance.
- Individual camp policy may choose to recommend or require specific immunizations of their campers. For the optimal health and safety of all campers and camp staff, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) strongly recommends that all campers meet the age appropriate

immunization schedule as set forth by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP): <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>

- At a minimum, campers should meet the same immunization requirements as school-aged children as indicated in Public Health Law (PHL) Article 21, Title 6, Section 2164. Refer to New York State Immunization Requirements for School Entrance/Attendance, available at: <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2370.pdf>.
- In New York State, PHL Article 21, Title 6, Section 2167 also requires the notification of campers and parents about recommendations for and the availability of meningococcal vaccine for all campers attending overnight camps for a period of 7 days or more.

### **RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES**

- Recommended immunizations, for all summer camp employees, including international staff, are based on the current recommendations of the ACIP. For further details and special circumstances, consult ACIP publications accessible at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/index.html> and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), accessible at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/vpd.html>.
- Immunizations that are routinely recommended, at a minimum, (if not already administered, a history of disease does not exist, or serology has not proven immunity) include:
  - 2 measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine doses
  - 1 tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine booster dose within the last 10 years,
  - 2 varicella vaccine doses.
- Immunizations that are recommended for employees that have special requirements include:
  - Hepatitis B vaccine for employees with reasonably anticipated risk for exposure to blood or body fluids (e.g. health care workers, lifeguards) and
  - Meningococcal vaccine for teens 11 – 18 years of age and for first year college students who live in dormitories.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- For additional information on immunizations given in other countries or on immunizations in general, please call your local health department or the NYSDOH Bureau of Immunization at 518 – 473 – 4437.
- For NYS vaccine schedules and school entrance requirements: [https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/recommended\\_vaccinations.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/recommended_vaccinations.htm).
- More information can also be obtained at the NCIRD website at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>.
- Communicable Disease Fact Sheets are available from the NYSDOH at: <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/>.

Thank you for your efforts to keep camps free of vaccine-preventable disease.

Sincerely,

Lynn Berger, M.D., M.P.H.  
Director  
Bureau of Immunization