

For Immediate Release | November 17, 2017

## Interior Health expanding meningococcal disease immunizations to Oliver, Osoyoos and Okanagan Falls residents aged 15-24

Interior Health (IH) is expanding immunizations for meningococcal disease to individuals 15-24 years of age in the Oliver region. This includes people from Osoyoos and Okanagan Falls who frequent the Oliver area. The Meningococcal Quadrivalent vaccine (Men-C-ACYW-135) will be offered free of charge to ensure appropriate protection.

IH is taking this precautionary measure after becoming aware of a third individual in the community who contracted meningococcal disease in early October. This is not a new case and there is no indication of sustained transmission of the bacteria in the community. This individual did not attend South Okanagan Secondary, but had social linkages to the school.

Although the risk remains low, Interior Health is reaching out to the 15-24 age group for immunization because meningococcal disease is reported more frequently among this age group.

We are also encouraging any students and staff at South Okanagan Secondary School who have not yet been vaccinated to attend an upcoming clinic. Individuals in this age group should continue to practice good personal hygiene by not sharing cigarettes or water bottles, by coughing into elbows or sleeves, and by frequently washing their hands.

Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection that occurs rarely in Canada. It can affect the meninges (lining around the brain) and/or blood. Transmission is by direct contact with the secretions of the nose and throat of infected individuals, or by respiratory droplets. Symptoms include sudden onset of high fever, severe headache, nausea and vomiting, stiff neck, rash, drowsiness or confusion and seizures. Vaccination against meningococcal disease remains the most effective way to avoid the spread of the disease.

Interior Health will be providing immunization clinics in Oliver at the Oliver Health Centre. Please bring your personal immunization records and BC Services card/Care Card to the clinic.

### Immunization clinics at the Oliver Health Centre:

- **Saturday November 18, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.**
- **Sunday November 19, 1-4 p.m.**

Interior Health advises that individuals who are showing symptoms such as fever, headache, stiff neck, or vomiting, to seek medical attention. Please do not visit local hospitals to obtain a vaccine, but attend one of the IH-offered clinics noted above.

For additional information about meningococcal disease, visit [HealthLinkBC](http://HealthLinkBC).

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