

## **Meningococcal Disease and Prevention**

Meningococcal disease spreads by direct contact with infected persons by coughing, kissing or sharing anything by mouth, such as water bottles, eating utensils, lipstick or toothbrushes. It can cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, and meningitis. Severe disease can cause brain damage, loss of hearing or limbs and even death. Fortunately, this life-threatening infection is rare.

The MCV4 vaccine protects our child against the most common types of bacteria that causes the disease. Children younger than 19 years of age can get the MCV4 for free in Washington State. Some health care providers' offices charge an administration fee or an office visit fee. Healthy teens who did not get one dose of vaccine during a pre-teen health visit should get a dose as soon as possible. A second dose (booster) is now recommended between the age of 16 and 18 or anytime before college.

To learn more about meningococcal disease and how to prevent exposure go to the Washington Department of Health website: [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)

## **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)**

HPV is a common virus. Most people exposed to HPV will never develop health issues. But for others, HPV causes major health problems, including cervical, anal, mouth and throat cancer. Most infected people have no symptoms and may spread the virus without knowing it. HPV spreads mainly through sexual contact.

To protect your child from HPV make sure they get the HPV vaccine; it is highly effective. The best time to get this vaccine is before sexual activity begins. Three doses of HPV vaccine are recommended for all boys and girls starting ages 11 – 12. Washington provides HPV vaccines at no cost for children under the age of 18. However, providers may charge an office visit and/or an administration fee to give the vaccine.

For more information on HPV and the HPV vaccine visit the Washington State Department of Health website: [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)