

Bacterial Meningitis Senate Bill 31

Senate Bill 31, which was passed by the Texas Legislature, requires public schools to annually provide all students and parents with information relating to bacterial meningitis. The information enclosed with this letter is to educate parents about the symptoms of this disease and what to do in the event that a student is diagnosed with bacterial meningitis.

The Texas Department of State Health Services stresses that this disease is not a widespread problem with children who are in public schools. The health departments and health clinics have this vaccine available. The vaccine is a required immunization for anyone entering college and for middle school students entering the 7th grade. The population most at risk for contracting bacterial meningitis is college freshmen that live in dormitories, but the chance of contracting the disease is also increased among younger teens. However, the Legislature did intend that all public school students and parents be made aware of this disease and the potential health consequences. This disease is transmitted by having close personal contact with someone who is sick with the disease. Meningococcal meningitis may come on fast in a matter of hours. Some symptoms are: severe headache, high fever (103 degrees or over), stiff neck, nausea/vomiting, numbness or loss of feeling, light sensitivity, confusion, rash and/or seizures. Someone with meningitis needs to be seen by a health-care provider immediately. The meningococcal vaccination can greatly reduce the risk of getting this very serious and potentially deadly disease, but does not protect against all strains of bacterial meningitis. Possible side effects of the vaccine are: pain, redness and swelling at the site of injection, headache or fatigue. For any other questions about the vaccination please consult your local physician.

For more information on meningitis please visit the following CDC web site.

<http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/bacterial.html>