

# Union County Public Schools Information to Promote Healthy Schools and Healthy Youth

## Influenza (the Flu)

**What is it?** Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses and can be easily spread to others. Infection with flu viruses can result in illness ranging from mild to severe and to life-threatening complications.

**What are the symptoms?** Symptoms include fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Other symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea are much more common in children than adults.

**How is it spread?** Flu is spread when a person with the flu coughs, sneezes, or speaks and sends the flu virus into the air. The virus enters the nose, throat, or lungs of a person and multiplies.

**Vaccine Information:** The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot. Vaccine against flu is available every year beginning in October through your private doctor as well as the Union County Health Department.

## Meningococcal Meningitis

**What is it?** Meningococcal Meningitis is a form of bacterial meningitis. People sometimes refer to it as spinal meningitis. It is a rare but potentially fatal bacterial infection that can lead to severe swelling of the fluid around the brain and spinal cord, or a serious blood infection.

**What are the symptoms?** Symptoms can progress rapidly and may resemble the flu. They can include fever, severe headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, confusion, sleepiness, and sensitivity to light. Some people may also develop a rash mainly on their arms and legs. Children with these symptoms should be checked by a doctor right away.

**How is it spread?** The disease is spread from person to person through the air or by contact with saliva, usually through close, personal contact with an infected person. The disease can be spread through coughing, sneezing or sharing items like a drinking glass.

**Vaccine Information:** A vaccine against the most common types of the disease is available through your private doctor as well as the Union County Health Department.

## Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

**What is it?** Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is a common virus that is spread from one person to another by close intimate contact. There are greater than 40 types of HPV that can cause infection and raise the risk of cervical cancer in women. HPV infection is most common in young women and men in their late teens and early 20's.

**What are the symptoms?** Some people will develop visible growths or bumps in the genital areas but the virus can live in the body and causes no symptoms, which is why it is so easily spread. Most people who have HPV do not know they are infected.

**How is it spread?** HPV is spread through close intimate contact. Both males and females can get it - and pass it on without even realizing it.

**Vaccine Information:** A vaccine is now available that can protect females (ages 9 – 26) from four major types of HPV. Check with your health insurance provider to see if they will cover the cost of the vaccine. If you are uninsured, contact your local Department of Social Services (DSS) to see if your child may qualify for HealthCheck/NC Health Choice insurance.

## Additional Information

Additional information regarding these and other important health-related issues is available on the Union County Public Schools website at [www.ucps.k12.nc.us](http://www.ucps.k12.nc.us), the NC Department of Health and Human Services website at [www.immunizenc.com](http://www.immunizenc.com), the Centers for Disease Control at [www.dcd.gov](http://www.dcd.gov) and the National Network for Immunization Information at [www.immunizationinfo.org](http://www.immunizationinfo.org). If you do not have access to a computer, you may obtain a copy of this information from your child's school.

Have a healthy and happy school year!