



County of San Diego

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
HEALTH SERVICES COMPLEX

3851 ROSECRANS, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92110
(619) 531-5800 FAX (619) 542-4186

NICK MACCHIONE, FACHE
DIRECTOR

WILMA J. WOOTEN, M.D., M.P.H.
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

Epidemiology & Immunization Services
Emergency & Disaster Medical Services
HIV, STD and Hepatitis
Maternal, Child and Family Health Services
Public Health Laboratory
PH Nursing
Border Health
TB Control & Refugee Health
Vital Records

March 19, 2013

Dear School Colleagues:

MENINGITIS OUTBREAK IN TIJUANA, BAJA CALIFORNIA

The County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency seeks your assistance in raising awareness and preventing spread of bacterial meningitis. Since January 1, 2013, there has been an unexpected rise in the number of cases of meningitis (caused by the bacteria, "meningococcus") in Tijuana, Mexico. To date, 25 suspect cases have been reported; 17 are confirmed or probable cases and 16 of these had disease caused by the a specific group C of the meningococcal bacteria. The most recent case was confirmed March 14, 2013. The median age of the 16 confirmed cases is 13 years (range 1 to 27 years). Five deaths have been reported there.

In San Diego this year, there have been two confirmed cases of meningococcal disease (a one-year old on February 19th, and an adult on March 14th). Neither had been to Tijuana, but their contacts may have traveled to Tijuana.

School personnel can help prevent a meningitis outbreak on the San Diego side of the border in the following ways:

1. If you are aware of a student or staff member with signs and symptoms of meningitis, relay this to a school nurse working with your site or the district's health office. Have a plan so that one representative from the school or district notifies the County's Epidemiology Program (see number, below).
2. Symptoms to be observant for include: fever, intense headache, lethargy, stiff neck, and/or a pinpoint rash that does not blanch under pressure.
3. School staff should take every opportunity to remind parents that a meningitis vaccine (MCV4) is routinely recommended for children and adolescents 11 to 18 years of age, with an initial dose recommended at age 11-12 and a booster at age 16 (or within 5 years of starting college). See below for sample wording of such notices.
4. Routine hygiene recommendations should be reinforced at school. Hand washing is important. Allow students to bring in and use their own hand sanitizer. As bacteria can be spread through coughing, sneezing, teach students that when a tissue is not available, they should cough or sneeze into their own elbow/sleeve, NOT their hand.
5. Sharing of saliva can spread disease so remind students not to share food or beverages, eating utensils, lipstick, or lip balm. Adults must not share cigarettes or pipes.

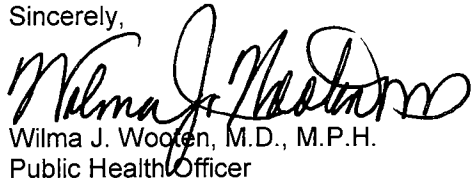
There are no changes in recommendations on travel to Tijuana or Mexico. Individuals traveling there should be aware of the recent reports of meningococcal disease and should promptly seek care for suggestive symptoms.

School nurses wishing to report disease to the county Epidemiology Program, should call 619-692-8499 Monday-Friday 8 AM-5 PM. After hours use: 858-565-5255.

Any question you have may be answered via one of the following web sites. The Central Nursing Office is also available for those not answered in this memo:

- Information about meningococcal disease: <http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/>
- Information about meningococcal vaccination: <http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/vaccine-info.html>
- Prevention and control of meningococcal disease: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5407a1.htm>

Sincerely,



Wilma J. Wooten, M.D., M.P.H.
Public Health Officer
Deputy Director, Public Health Services