

NEWS RELEASE

May 9, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Person: Barb Thetard

Telephone: (815) 941-3126

Need for Booster Dose for Bacterial Meningitis

Meningococcal disease, also known as bacterial meningitis, is a rare but sometimes deadly infection. The disease hits quickly and has severe complications, including hearing loss, brain damage, limb amputation, and loss of kidney function and, in some cases, death. There are approximately 2600 cases of bacterial meningitis per year in the United States and an average of 333,000 cases in developing countries.

Adolescents and young adults are at increased risk for getting meningococcal disease. They account for nearly 15 % of all cases of meningococcal disease reported in the United States. Death rates are higher among adolescents and young adults compared with other age groups and approximately one in seven will die. The majority of meningococcal disease cases among adolescents and young adults may be prevented by vaccination.

The Grundy County Health Department has a meningococcal vaccine provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health Vaccine for Children Program for routine vaccination for adolescents 11 – 18 years, with 11 – 12 years being the best time to vaccinate. Also the vaccine is recommended for 19 – 21 years, if they are entering college or are in a college or university setting. Certain eligibility requirements must be met to participate in the Vaccine for Children Program. The qualifications include the following: enrolled in Medicaid, does not have health insurance, is an American Indian or Alaskan Native or has health insurance that does not pay for vaccines.

There are new recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for a booster (second) dose of a meningococcal vaccine. This recommendation for a booster dose of bacterial meningitis is being utilized at the Grundy County Health Department. All adolescents who were first vaccinated at ages 11-12 years need a booster dose at age 16 years; all teens who were vaccinated at ages 13-15 years need a booster dose at age 16-18 years. Adults 19-21 years who are living in on-campus housing should get a booster dose if their previous dose was given before 16 years.

The Grundy County Health Department has clinics by appointment on Wednesdays. To schedule an appointment call the nursing secretary at 815/941-3419. Any other questions call the immunization coordinator at 815/941-3417. The Health Department asks for a \$15.00 donation, but no one is turned away if unable to pay. The Health Department has private purchase meningococcal vaccine for individuals 19 years of age and older for \$125.00.

If this would be a financial hardship, the Beth Ann Miller Health Foundation has donated monies to cover the cost of this vaccine. The foundation provides funding for vaccination against meningococcal disease. Beth Ann was away at college in March 1999, when she became sick with flu-like symptoms. Two days later, she died from bacterial meningitis. Beth Ann was from Coal City. Her family and friends established the Beth Ann Miller Health Foundation to promote awareness of meningitis

###