

May 24, 2010

Dave Peterson, Superintendent
Farwell Public Schools
Farwell, Michigan

Re: Case of Meningitis

Dear Sir:

The Central Michigan District Health Department was notified of a case of meningitis in a student of the Farwell School District. The student is currently hospitalized and the student's status is unknown at this time. We all pray for the student's speedy and full recovery.

Meningitis is an inflammation of the protective coverings of the brain and spinal cord. Meningitis can be caused by a virus or a bacteria. People quickly recover from viral meningitis without treatment. Bacterial meningitis is more of a concern than viral meningitis. Treatment of bacterial meningitis requires the administration of antibiotics.

The exact cause of the student's meningitis is unknown. Tests are being conducted to determine the cause. Preliminary tests suggest the cause to be bacterial.

The symptoms of meningitis include fever, headache, confusion, difficulty staying awake, and a painful and stiff neck. Symptoms are often sudden and can be accompanied by nausea and vomiting. Anyone exhibiting these symptoms should seek urgent medical care.

In some cases of meningitis it is important for close contacts to receive preventative antibiotics. A close contact is someone that is a household contact, people that have shared eating utensils, close school friends, and people that have shared drinks with someone with meningitis.

People that do not need to be given preventative antibiotics are casual acquaintances of the student and casual acquaintances of household contacts. People that are not certain if they should be given preventative antibiotics should contact their family doctor.

Preventative treatment for students consists of four doses of an antibiotic called rifampin. For adults 18 years of age and older rifampin or ciprofloxacin can be given.

For more information regarding this matter please contact the Central Michigan District Health Department at 989-773-5921 ext. 8434.

Sincerely,

Robert Graham, DO, MPH, FAAFP
Medical Director
Central Michigan District Health Department