

# *Meningitis Information for Parents and Students*

August, 2011

Greenfield-Central Community Schools would like for parents and students to be informed about Meningococcal Disease (Bacterial Meningitis) and its vaccine.

Meningitis is an illness in which there is swelling of the tissues that cover the brain and spinal cord. There are two kinds of meningitis, each caused by a different type of organism. **Viral Meningitis** is usually not as serious as bacterial meningitis, and patients usually get better with minimal treatment. **Bacterial Meningitis**, on the other hand, can be very serious and result in disability or death if not treated promptly. It is a rare disease that can cause an outbreak in a specific area, such as a college campus. The bacteria that cause bacterial meningitis are transmitted through air droplets and by direct contact with an infected person.

Often, the symptoms of viral meningitis and bacterial meningitis are the same. Symptoms of meningitis frequently resemble the flu and can include a fever, headache, confusion, nausea and stiff neck, making the disease difficult to diagnose. For this reason, if you think you or your child has meningitis, see your doctor as soon as possible.

There is a vaccine available (*Menactra* or *MCV4*) which protects against 2 of the 3 most common types of bacterial meningitis. Beginning last school year, the Indiana State Department of Health and the Indiana Department of Education **requires** that all students in **grades 6 through 12** be immunized against Meningitis.

You may contact the Hancock County Health Department at 477-1125 or your health care provider for further information about meningitis. There is more information about meningitis at the following websites: CDC – [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), Indiana State Department of Health – [www.isdh.gov/isdh](http://www.isdh.gov/isdh), and American Academy of Pediatrics – [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). You may also contact Marsha Chambers, School Corporation Nurse, at 477-4601 if you have questions or concerns.