

2018 – 2019 SCHOOL YEAR TO THE PARENTS OF SECONDARY 3 STUDENTS

RE: School vaccination program

The legal age for healthcare consent in Québec is 14. Parental consent is therefore not required if your child wants to get vaccinated at school. Please review the information below so you can help your child navigate the vaccination process.

Vaccination record

Before proceeding with the vaccination, the nurse will review your child's file and vaccination record to make sure he or she is up-to-date on vaccinations against the following diseases: tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, measles, rubella, mumps, meningococcal serogroup C infection, chickenpox, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and HPV infections. The nurse will then be able to administer any missing vaccines. If your child did not receive two doses of HPV or hepatitis A and B vaccine in Elementary 4, an initial dose can be administered at the same time as the Tdap vaccine and meningococcal serogroup C conjugate vaccines and the second dose six months later.

These diseases still exist and can be contracted, so it is important for your child to be protected. The vaccines are safe and effective. For chickenpox, a child who was vaccinated before age 13 or became ill after age one is considered protected.

Your child should bring his or her vaccination record, but the nurse will be able to offer the recommended vaccinations regardless.

Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccine

Your child will have the opportunity to receive a dose of the Tdap vaccine, which protects against tetanus (T), diphtheria (d), and pertussis or whooping cough (ap). Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis are very serious diseases caused by bacteria. Vaccination is critical for young people. Even if your child has been vaccinated against tetanus and diphtheria in the past five years (e.g., following an injury or animal bite or before travel), the Tdap vaccine is recommended to protect against whooping cough.

Meningococcal serogroup C vaccine

Meningococcus is a bacteria that can cause severe infections such as meningitis and blood poisoning (septicemia). A dose is administered at 12 months of age, but since teenagers are at high risk for meningitis, experts in Québec recommend they get a booster in Secondary 3.

HPV vaccine

HPV stands for human papillomavirus. HPV is one of the most common viral infections in the world and comes in many different types. You can be infected by more than one type of HPV at the same time, or be infected by the same type more than once. Some types of HPV can cause condyloma (anal or genital warts), precancerous lesions on the genitals or cervix, or cancers of the cervix, vagina, vulva, penis, anus, mouth, and throat. HPV is transmitted through intimate skin-to-skin contact, most often during sexual activity, even without penetration. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI). An infection may go away on its own over time, or it may lie dormant for years without signs or symptoms before turning into cancer.

Other types of HPV can cause genital warts, which may or may not be visible to the naked eye. Genital warts do not cause cancer and generally go away on their own, but their treatment can be painful and may require several doctor's visits.

The HPV vaccine has been offered to both boys and girls in Elementary 4 since September 2016. When it launched, the vaccination program was aimed at preventing cervical and uterine cancer, so it was originally offered only to girls. Since then, a number of scientific studies have shown that HPV vaccines offered in school vaccination programs protect boys against genital warts, penile cancer, anal cancer, and throat cancer. For maximum protection, the vaccine should be given before young people become sexually active, which is why it is recommended in Elementary 4.

You can find more information on HPV and the HPV vaccine at:

- Government of Québec: Quebec.ca/vaccination
- Public Health Agency of Canada: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/faq-eng.php>
- Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada: <http://www.hpvinfos.ca/>

There is no risk in receiving several vaccines in one session. This is a safe, standard practice around the world.

Your child will receive a fact sheet on potential side effects that could appear within 24 to 72 hours of vaccination and how to relieve them.

Vaccinations at Lester B Pearson will take place on December 6th & 7th 2018.

Please make sure your child brings his or her vaccination record. It will be updated with any vaccines that are administered. Health insurance cards are not required.

If you would like more information, please contact the school nurse, Maria Di Matteo at 514-384-2000 ext. 7292 opt.1. For more information on vaccination and vaccine-preventable diseases, visit the Vaccination section of the Government of Québec website at Quebec.ca/vaccination.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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