

Procedures for Handling Vaccine-Preventable Diseases at Camp



The rapid spread of vaccine-preventable diseases can quickly change a pleasant camp visit into a difficult experience for staff and campers. The following information is provided to help prevent and identify an illness outbreak and limit its impact. **Early intervention may prevent additional cases of illness.** For additional information on handling vaccine-preventable diseases, contact your local health department.

➤ BEFORE CAMP BEINGS: COLLECT AND REVIEW IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

- Obtain immunization records for campers and staff well in advance of their arrival at camp (Go to: https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/camps/docs/vpd_camp_letter.pdf for recommended immunizations for campers.
- Review immunization records for completeness. For camp purposes, the children's schedule (<https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2370.pdf>) can also be used to evaluate adult vaccination records.
- Efforts should be made to assure complete vaccination status of campers and staff prior to arrival at camp.

➤ ONCE AT CAMP: IDENTIFICATION AND NOTIFICATION

- In the event individuals arrive without complete vaccinations and unclear history of disease, discuss vaccination with parents and adult staff. Your camp's medical provider or local health department can arrange vaccination(s) for them. A list of susceptible individuals should be maintained by the camp at all times in the event of an outbreak and need for potential camper exclusion.
- Screen new campers and staff for illness as they arrive at camp. Ask about recent exposure to anyone known to have a communicable disease and recent foreign travel; log in the campers' files.
- Check the medical log entries daily for recurring ailments and increased frequency of cases of illness with similar symptoms (i.e., headache, fever, swollen glands, rash, cough, etc).
- Camps are required to notify their local health department within 24 hours of any illness suspected of being water, food, or air-borne, or spread by contact (including vaccine-preventable diseases). If multiple campers or staff are ill with similar symptoms, your camp may be experiencing an outbreak. Local and state health departments are available to consult on prevention and control of any case or outbreak of illness in a camp.
- In the event of an outbreak, work with your local health department to develop and maintain a log of ill campers and staff. This log should include the name, age, sex, camper or staff, unit/dorm/tent/cabin, onset date and time, symptoms, duration (hours), vaccine history, and treatment or action.
- Notify parents of the illness outbreak. Please contact your local health department for assistance.

➤ WHAT TO DO EVERY DAY: PREVENTION AND CONTROL

- Handwashing (staff and campers) must occur frequently and not just during outbreaks! Wash hands after activities and always after using the bathroom and before eating. Provide plenty of soap and disposable paper towels in handwash areas. In situations where sinks are unavailable, camp staff should carry a container of alcohol-based hand sanitizer and use according to the manufacturer's guidelines.
- Inform all campers and staff to cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or cough or sneeze into an elbow if no tissue is available).
- Maintain at least 6 feet separation between the heads of beds in sleeping quarters.
- Housekeeping – Areas in which ill people are living or which are soiled by vomitus or feces require increased housekeeping emphasis (bathrooms, sleeping areas, etc.)
- Food Service – Clean dining areas after each use. Ensure proper cleaning of all reusable common eating utensils and dishware and do not allow re-use or sharing of unclean eating utensils, drinking cups, etc.

➤ WHEN DISEASE IS SUSPECTED/IDENTIFIED: RESTRICTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

- Physically separate ill campers and staff from the well and consult with your local health department regarding their return to activities.
 - **If isolating ill campers and staff at camp** – Designate separate activity, eating, and housing areas for anyone that is ill. Campers and staff with the same illness should stay together; if more than one illness occurs at the same time, separate ill persons according to their disease. If you are unable to house all ill people separately from well people, consider sending ill people home.
 - **If sending ill campers and staff home** – Isolate ill persons from others while they are waiting to be picked up. Ill persons should avoid public transportation. Alert your local health department that the camper or staff member has been sent home and the camper or staff member's home address. This will enable the health department to follow up with ill persons after they leave your camp.
- In an outbreak, limit entry and exit from camp; postpone or restrict activities involving visitors, including other camps, until cleared by your local health department.

**Contact your local health department at () – between : a.m. and : p.m. weekdays,
or call () – after hours, weekends and holidays.**