



Broad Meadow Brook Nature Day Camp

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Contact Information

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Welcome to Broad Meadow Brook Nature Day Camp

Welcome to Broad Meadow Brook Nature Day Camp! We are excited that you have chosen to come to camp here. Please read through the handbook, as there is a wealth of information for you and your camper. Please put this in a safe place and refer to it as it gets closer to your arrival at summer camp. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me right away either by e-mail or telephone, both of which are listed on the cover page.

Our camp is a welcoming space where campers and counselors can be themselves. Our counselors often choose to wear pronoun buttons so that people don't have to guess. We request that everyone entering our camp space be respectful of pronoun usage and personal choices.

In order for your child to have the best summer that they can have, we ask that you enter into a partnership with us at Broad Meadow Brook. Below are the expectations for campers and caregivers and what you can expect from us in return.

Expectations & Goals

We expect that all campers will:

- be respectful – of nature, our sanctuary, our fellow campers' and our staff.
- be able to move about on uneven terrain.
- participate meaningfully in age-appropriate activities, including nature study.
- follow stated behavior expectations and safety rules, including staying with the group.

We expect that caregivers will:

- share all pertinent medical information with us.
- share any behavior plans or behavior tactics that work well for your camper at home and/or school.
- complete medical forms (CampDoc) no later than May 1.

Camp Goals:

- **Explore.** We want your camper to have positive experiences exploring the world around them! Every day we explore the sanctuary being as hands-on as we can.
- Campers will be engaged in fun and interesting investigations that will set the foundation for basic ecological concepts and increase their knowledge of our local habitats including flora and fauna.
- **Question.** We want campers to question the world around them. We hope to build upon their natural curiosity to discover.
- Campers learn about conservation and stewardship through age-appropriate hands-on activities.
- **Connect.** We want your camper to connect to nature, to their counselors and to other campers. We want campers to grow through trying new experiences.
- We want campers of all backgrounds, abilities and identities to feel safe and supported physically, socially and emotionally.

Camp will be based out of the Barbara Fargo Education Center.

We promise to give your camper the best possible camp experience that we can!

Every camper is unique, and every camper is special. We respect and encourage our campers and our staff to be the best person they can be. Our staff is committed to creating positive camp experiences. We promise to create an atmosphere where learning is fun. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to experience nature with your child!

Licenses & Accreditation

Broad Meadow Brook Nature Day Camp is proud to be an American Camp Association accredited camp. You can learn more about the accreditation process at acacamps.org

Broad Meadow Brook Nature Day Camp complies with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (105 CMR 430) and is licensed by the Worcester Board of Health.

Payments/Deadlines/Refund policy

Payments & Payment Plans

- Payments should be made to your account via the [Mass Audubon website](#) (not CampDoc).
- All payments need to be paid in full by May 1, unless you have set up a payment plan.
- If you register after May 1, payment is due in full unless you set up a payment plan.
- Payment plans are available at all tier levels. Call or email to set up your plan.

Refund Policy

- A full refund, minus the non-refundable deposit, is provided to camp families who cancel in writing on or before May 1. After May 1 no refund is available.
- Refunds are not given for participant dismissal, failure to attend, absence, or sick days.
- We reserve the right to cancel a session due to low enrollment; you will receive a full refund.

Health Forms / CampDoc

- CampDoc profiles need to be completed by May 1.
- Health forms and immunization information are due by May 1 and should be completed on CampDoc.
- Please contact the Camp Director immediately if:
 - You do not have health insurance.
 - You are unable to complete the immunization form.
 - Your camper has limitations or special needs. The Camp Director will inform you if said needs can be accommodated. Non-disclosure may result in the removal of your camper from the program with no refund.
- If you register after May 1, CampDoc profiles need to be completed 2 weeks before your session begins.

What to Wear & What to Pack

Please label all of your child's belongings so that they can be returned to you. Mass Audubon is not responsible for lost or damaged items at camp.

What to Wear

- Closed toe shoes with a heel strap such as sneakers or hiking boots (no crocs, please!). Shoes must be worn in camp at all times and must be secure on the ankle.
- Socks are important! We are hiking and moving all day and we don't want to send your camper home with blisters!
- Comfortable clothing for being outside. Many campers wear t-shirts and shorts.

What to Pack

- **A nutritious lunch and a morning snack** - We do not have space to refrigerate lunches or snacks. Please use an ice pack to ensure that your child's lunch remains cold. We cannot microwave food. Lunch should be ready to eat.
 - Mass Audubon promotes the reduction of waste. We ask you to pack a lunch and a snack with as little waste as you can, such as cloth napkins instead of paper, re-use baggies rather than throwing them away or bringing sandwiches and cookies in a reusable container.
 - Please consider packing a slightly larger lunch - our campers have big appetites after a morning of hiking!
 - After camp participants have a second snack that will be provided.
 - Some campers will have breakfast and lunch provided through the USDA food program. Please contact the camp director if you are unsure.
- **Peanuts and Tree Nuts at camp:** We allow peanuts and tree nuts at camp and will remind campers that food should not be shared with other campers. If there is a camp group where there is a known airborne nut allergy, we will inform camp families beforehand and ask that you do not pack any foods that contain the specific nut (peanuts, for example).
- **Re-fillable 12 - 16 oz water bottle.** We drink a lot of water! It is necessary to re-fill our bottles throughout the day. Please make sure that you send an appropriately sized water bottle. No glass water bottles.
- **Sunscreen and Insect repellent** (pump, cream, wipe only - aerosol sprays end up in campers' eyes)
 - Please apply before arriving at camp. If you need to apply at camp, please pull into a parking space - do not hold up the drop off line to apply sunscreen or insect repellent.
- **Extra clothes** - we get wet and dirty. Campers often want to change.
- **Rain boots or old sneakers** to wear in the water (we also have some to borrow.)
- **Rain jacket.** No umbrellas. We go outside in the rain.
- **Backpack** - this is helpful to carry items on the trail. Or to keep all your belongings together at your homebase area.

Optional Items

- **Long pants & long-sleeved shirts** - these can be helpful to avoid mosquito bites.
- **Tall socks** that go over your pants - this can be helpful to avoid ticks.
- **Camera** - cameras can be a great way to capture camp memories. If you choose to bring a camera, please bring cameras that are not worth a lot of money. Camp can also be a rough and tumble kind of place.
- **Hat** - to protect from sun and insects

What Not to Bring

- **Smart watches, cell phones or other electronic devices** - We understand that technology is part of today's world. However, one of our goals at camp is to become immersed in the natural world. Technology can be a distraction. If your child must bring a cell phone, it should remain in their backpack until they leave camp. All staff carry walkie talkies. If there is an emergency or staff need to reach leadership - we use our walkie talkies. Your camper does not need a cell phone for emergencies. Camper use of cell phones may result in the cell phone being stored in the camp office until the end of the day.
- **Guns, bullets, knives or any other weapons or fireworks** - All of these items could be potentially dangerous and are not necessary at camp.
- **Valuable toys / Special toys**
- **Sports equipment**

Sanctuary Regulations for staff and visitors AD.16.1 **Personal Property Regulations/No Smoking Policies**

It is the policy of the Broad Meadow Brook Nature Day Camp that:

- Smoking, including vaping, on the sanctuary (regardless of the location, inside or outside of sanctuary buildings) is prohibited. Any day camp staff member or camper found smoking on the sanctuary will be dismissed from the program.
- The use of alcohol or drugs on the sanctuary (regardless of the location, inside or outside of the sanctuary buildings) is prohibited. Any day camp staff member or camper found using alcohol or drugs on the sanctuary or arriving under the influence of alcohol and /or drugs will be dismissed from the program.
- Camp staff are not permitted to have personal sports equipment at camp. Staff will use equipment provided by the camp for all activities.
- Camp staff vehicles will be parked in a designated area. Camp staff are NOT permitted to have campers in their vehicles, regardless of whether or not the vehicle is parked or in operation.
- Neither day camp staff nor campers are permitted to have personal animals on sanctuary, including livestock, pets, or specimens.
- Weapons (knives/firearms) or ammunition (whether real or blanks) of any kind are not permitted on sanctuary, whether in a vehicle, container, knapsack/luggage, or in a person's clothing. Anyone found having weapons or ammunition of any kind in their possession will be dismissed from the program.

Typical Camp Day

<u>All Sessions except Bear Cubs</u>		<u>Bear Cubs</u>	
8 – 9 am	Before Camp Care (<i>optional</i>)	8 – 9 am	Before Camp Care (<i>optional</i>)
8:50 – 9:25 am	Drop-off and morning activity	9 – 9:25 am	Drop-off and morning activity
9:05-9:25 am	Choice Time Activity (Tues-Fri)	9:30 –9:45 am	Opening Circle
9:30 – 9:45 am	Opening Circle	9:45-10:30 am	Period 1
9:45 –10:30 am	Period 1	10:30 – 10:45 am	Morning snack
10:30 – 10:45 am	Snack	10:45 – 12 pm	Period 2
10:45 – 12 pm	Period 2	12 – 12:30 pm	Lunch
12 – 12:45 pm	Lunch & free play	12:30 – 12:50 pm	Organized Games
12:45 – 1 pm	Story or Meditation	12:50 pm	Closing Circle
1 – 2 pm	Period 3	1:00 pm	Pick-up
2 – 3 pm	Period 4		
3:00 – 3:15 pm	Closing Circle		
3:15 – 3:45 pm	Pick-up and afternoon activity		
3:30 – 5:30 pm	After Camp Care (<i>optional</i>)		
3:30 – 4:45 pm	After camp campers are engaged in activities and may be away from the main camp building		
4:45 – 5:30 pm	After Camp Pick up		

- ❖ 1st year CIT's will follow the above schedule for their training week.
- ❖ Advanced CIT's & 1st year CIT's other weeks should try to arrive for 8:30 am whenever possible. Dismissal is at the same time as above schedule.
- ❖ Exploring Mass Audubon Camp Session has a separate schedule and itinerary. It will be sent directly to those campers and their families.
- ❖ **Before and After Camp options are available:** If you wish to sign up for either of these options, please call us right away at 508-753-6087 or 508-640-5612 (direct line).

End of Session Presentation – Friday at 7 pm, virtually!

On the last Friday of every camp session, we will have a camp presentation featuring a video of the campers and what they have been doing at camp. This presentation will be done virtually and will happen at 7 pm.

A link to the show will be emailed to you in advance. You are welcome to share the link with family and friends.

Camp Family Appreciation Night – In Person

August 5, 2026, 7-8 pm at Broad Meadow Brook

Camp staff will entertain you and your campers with songs and skits! Bring a lawn chair or a blanket to sit on.

Absent / Late (AD.23)

- If your child will not be attending camp or will be late (arriving after 9:45 am), please call us and let us know. 508-640-5615 or 508-640-5612 (direct line) If you don't call us - we will be calling you!
- The Visitor Center at Broad Meadow Brook is closed on Mondays except for camp. If you need to contact camp, please call 508-640-5615 and leave a message if no one answers. This voicemail is checked often.
 - When you arrive at camp, you will be greeted by camp counselors. They will help you find your group's homebase. At your homebase, you will find a cubby to store your belongings in.
 - Your counselor will help you find an activity to do while you wait for the remaining campers to arrive.
 - We will give all campers an orientation of their homebase and the restrooms, so that they will know where they can and cannot go during their camp day.
 - Tuesday - Friday, we have choice time from 9:05 - 9:25 am. Choices include games in the field, nature walk, counselor choice and hanging out on the porch. *Bear Cubs do not participate in choice time.
 - Every Thursday is Wacky Tacky Thursday. Counselors will be wearing something wacky and crazy. Campers are encouraged to also wear something wacky and tacky. Campers need to be able to participate at camp or have the ability to change easily after our opening circle. No toy weapons or swords. Campers need to be able to see out of any mask. Campers are not required to dress up.
 - We will conduct a fire drill during snack time on the first day of every camp session. Counselors will prepare their campers for this important drill.

Opening Circle

During opening circle, the whole camp will gather in the Bird Blind Field. We will sing songs, look at the daily weather and counselors will share a little of their schedule for the day. This can be a loud sensory experience. Campers are not required to be in the circle when it is loud - but they must be near our circle so that we can keep everyone safe.

Closing Circle

During closing circle, the whole camp will gather in the Bird Blind Field. Campers will have the opportunity to share their favorite part of the day in their small group. As a whole camp, we will sing a song. We will share shout-outs and announcements.

Camp Surveys

- Parents/guardians will receive an email at the end of each session. Please complete the survey - your feedback helps improve our program.
- Some campers may have the opportunity to participate in a brief, internal survey to help us learn about and improve the camp experience. These surveys are optional; campers have the choice of participating or not. Trained camp staff will make audio recordings, which we will share with the Director of Evaluation to transcribe and analyze. Quotes and data from these surveys may be published, however campers will not be identified. Campers will be chosen at random, and only campers with prior authorization (media release) signed by their parents/guardians may participate in the camper survey. If you have questions, please contact camps@massaudubon.org

Drop Off and Pick Up Information AD.4.1

For Full Day Sessions:

Before Care: 8 – 8:50 am (*optional*)
 Drop-off time: 8:50 – 9:25 am
 Closing Circle: 3:00 – 3:15 pm
 Pick-up time: 3:15 – 3:45 pm
 After Care: 3:30 – 5:30 pm (*optional*)
 After Care Pick up: 4:45- 5:30 pm

For Half Day Sessions:

Before Care: 8 – 8:50 am (*optional*)
 Drop-off time: 8:50 – 9:25 am
 Closing Circle: 12:50 – 1 pm
 Pick-up time: 1 pm

- The traffic flow is to the right as you enter the parking area.

Drop Off

- Vehicle drop off - pull into the bus parking area – up to the sign, wait in your vehicle to be greeted by a camp staff person.
- Walk your camper into camp - Please park in a legal parking space and walk to the bridge. Wait at the top of the bridge for camp staff to greet you there.
- Please do not apply bug spray and sunscreen in the drop off line. Please pull into a parking space to do that. You can then re-join the vehicle drop off line or walk your camper to the bridge.
- All campers must be checked in by camp staff. Do not drop your camper off and leave without being checked in.
- If you have medications to drop off – be sure to follow all instructions found in the medication section of this handbook.

Pick-Up

- In person pick up – walk up to the gate in the bird blind field (field closest to the parking lot). A staff member will meet you and check your photo ID. Then your camper(s) will be escorted to you.
- Vehicle pick up - pull into the bus parking area – up to the sign. A staff member will meet you and check your photo ID. Then your camper(s) will be escorted to your vehicle.
- After camp pick up – you can park and walk up to the bridge or pull up in the bus parking area and a staff member will come to you.

Other dismissal notes (AD.23):

- Only authorized individuals will be allowed to pick up your child. Additions made during the week (written – on a note or an email) are only valid for that week. If you want to permanently add an authorized pick-up, email the camp director so that we can unlock your CampDoc profile and you can add additional pick-up individuals. (lcarlin@massaudubon.org)
- When picking up your child please bring your driver's license or another form of photo identification. Our staff will be checking. We will not dismiss a camper without confirming that they are an authorized pick-up person.
- If you need to pick up your child early, please try to give us as much notice as possible, since your child's group may be up to 45 minutes away from the Barbara Fargo Education Center.
- If your camper will be walking to camp or being dismissed from camp without an adult, please contact the camp director to review the safety plan.

- Please remind your camper(s) that they may not run out of camp to greet you. They must be checked out of camp by staff.

Health and Emergency policies AD.11, AD.2.1, HW.8.1

Our complete health care policy is available upon request

All campers need to have a complete health form on file. We use CampDoc – an electronic health system. You will receive a separate e-mail from CampDoc to log-in.

Families will be contacted during the camp day if:

- A camper needs health care beyond our training
- A camper is not feeling well, and we determine it is best that they rest at home
- First aid was provided, and health care supervisors want to alert families before pick up
- A camper sustained an injury to the head.

Healthcare at Camp

- **In the event of minor injury or first aid:** Families will be notified at the end of the day using a Boo Boo form that indicates the nature of the injury, what was provided, and by whom. Camp will keep a copy. All camp staff are first aid and CPR certified.
- **Not feeling well before camp** - Please keep your child home if they are not feeling well, are overtired, have a fever, earache, nauseous, have conjunctivitis, a sore throat, or a skin rash. We want campers to be happy and comfortable at camp, and we must avoid the spread of diseases.
- **Ill at Camp** - If your child becomes ill while at camp, we will notify you if the illness appears to be serious or if it extends beyond 20-30 minutes. Sick children stay with leadership staff in the camp office (at the Education Center) so that they can rest and be monitored. Symptoms of illness that require campers to go home include and are not limited to: temperature ≥ 100 degrees F, throwing up, earache, sore throat, conjunctivitis, skin eruptions, continuous cough, etc.
- People with infectious or communicable disease may not return to camp until the recommended time determined by our healthcare consultant has passed. If an outbreak of communicable disease occurs, any participant who is not fully immunized (due to religious or health risk reasons) will remain at home for the time recommended by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Refunds are not given due to missed time at camp.
- **Tick Check** - Every night you should take a few moments to check your child for ticks. Ticks can be picked up anywhere, including at camp, and in your backyard. Be sure to check behind the knees, at the underwear lines, underarms, and the hairline. [Click here for Additional Tick Information.](#)
- **Food Allergies** - During lunch and snack times, campers are instructed not to share food but only eat what their caregiver has packed for them. Children eating peanut butter or nuts will be escorted to the bathroom to wash their hands before the next activity.
- **Bathroom Needs:** Campers will have opportunities to use the bathroom throughout the camp day. While we know some of our younger campers may be new to going to the bathroom on their own-- please reinforce potty training before the start of

camp. Our staff do not provide one on one assistance during toileting and campers are expected to be able to fully use the toilet and clean up after themselves.

If an accident occurs, cleaning up and changing clothes is handled by the Camp Director and another trained member of camp leadership in a matter-of-fact way that does not shame, humiliate, or embarrass the child. Soiled clothes will be bagged and returned to the family at pick-up. If you have any concerns about bathrooming, please contact the Camp Director.

Medications

- **Medications** - All medications, over the counter and prescription, need to be listed on your camper's medical form. All medications must be in the original container, have the camper's name on it and dosage. All medications must also be approved by our Health Care Consultant to be in camp. Medication will be stored in the medicine box unless it is an emergency medication. For emergency medication, please tell us if that medication should be carried by the camper (if so, where will it be kept) or if it will be carried by the counselor. **No medication should be carried by a camper without the camp's awareness – including over the counter medication.**
- Senior staff will distribute medications to counselors each morning and check in medication every afternoon/night to senior staff. No medication will be kept over a weekend, even if you are returning for the next session. If medication is not picked up, it will be properly disposed of on or after December 1st.

In case of emergency:

- We will call "911" and then contact you.
- First aid will be administered at the level of training. The Camp Director, or Assistant Camp Director will notify families. We will work with you to coordinate further care, pick-up, or transportation of the child.
- UMass Medical Center on Plantation St. in Worcester is our closest emergency hospital.

Bathroom Needs: Campers will have opportunities to use the bathroom throughout the camp day. While we know some of our younger campers may be new to going to the bathroom on their own - please reinforce potty training before the start of camp. Our staff do not provide one on one assistance during toileting and campers are expected to be able to fully use the toilet and clean up after themselves. If you have any concerns about bathrooming, please contact the Camp Director.

Meningococcal Info

Campers are not considered to have increased risk of Meningococcal Disease, but the Department of Public Health requires us to provide information. You can find out more [here](#) or on the [Mass Audubon website](#).

Behavior Protocol

Behavior Expectations

Our staff establishes expectations and offers guidance throughout each day. Mass Audubon sanctuaries are open to the public and camp groups may spend time in areas that have

visitors, vehicles, varied terrain, water, and wild animals. In order for everyone to have a safe and positive experience, campers are expected to follow Mass Audubon's Camper Code of Conduct with minimal support from staff.

Mass Audubon's Camper Code of Conduct

Respect Yourself

- Take care of yourself and your body and ask for help.
- Apply sunscreen and bug spray.
- If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, talk with an adult.

Respect Nature

- Carry-in/carry-out: Take trash and recycling with you or put in an appropriate bin.
- Leave animals, plants, and other parts of nature where you found them.
- Observe wild animals from a distance. Use your eyes not your hands, unless it is permitted by camp staff.

Respect Others

- Listen and follow instructions given by camp staff.
- Stay with your group at all times.
- Use caring and kind language.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Respect other people's physical space and objects.
- Listen to all ideas and be inclusive; allow others to join/play with you.
- Treat others the way they want to be treated and celebrate each other's individuality. Use pronouns and names people introduce themselves with.

All families and campers review and sign off on Mass Audubon's Behavior Expectations and Camper Code of Conduct before attending camp. In addition, Mass Audubon's camp goals and inclusion practices are on our [website](#). Infringements of the behavior expectations and/or safety rules bring fair and obvious consequences. Behavior expectations are listed on the next page.

Behavior Management and Response

When campers struggle with the behavior expectations set for them in the Camper Code of Conduct, camp staff will follow one or more of the steps below, depending on the situation. Camp staff may try a step multiple times.

- reminders of the rule
- one-on-one discussion,
- time away from activities to reset self, and
- discussion with Senior Staff

If a camper acts in an unsafe manner that is physically harmful to self or others, staff will remove the camper from the danger and bring them to the Camp Director or Assistant Director.

In the case of serious and/or constant issues, the guardian will be called and a behavior agreement will be determined. Those who cannot meet these expectations may be removed from the camp program without refund.

As mandated by the state, corporal punishment will not be used; no camper will be subjected to cruel or severe punishment; humiliation or verbal abuse; no camper will be denied food as punishment, and no camper will be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.

A complete copy of the Behavior Protocol is available upon request.

Accommodations for Campers

As an outdoor, nature-based program, it is important that families of children who have disabilities understand Mass Audubon's expectations, programs, and terrain prior to enrolling.

Due to the outdoor and exploratory nature of our camp programs, campers move on uneven terrain throughout the day. The terrain varies from hard-packed, gently sloped paths to steeper, uneven trails that may have exposed rocks, tree roots, and other obstacles. Weather could affect our trail conditions. We encourage all families to visit the camp's sanctuary prior to enrolling to understand its unique terrain.

If your child requires accommodation, please contact the camp director as soon as possible; a delay in request could have the unintended consequence of disrupting your child's Mass Audubon camp experience.

One-to-one Aides

Mass Audubon camps do not provide one-to-one support; however, we do welcome one-to-one aides to support campers when they are provided by the family. Aides must follow Mass Audubon's Child Protection Standards, including obtaining a CORI/SORI and background check prior to their time participating within our programs. More information and training may be required prior to the aide starting within the program. If your child requires an aide in school, please contact the camp director as soon as possible to discuss how Mass Audubon can best support your child. Family members are not permitted to be aides.

Camp Policy Requests

Our background check, health care, and behavior and discipline policies as well as the grievance procedures are available upon request.

Thank you for being part of the Broadmeadow Brook Nature Camp community. Together, we create a space where children can explore, learn, and grow in the natural world. We look forward to an exciting summer of discovery and adventure with your family!



Meningitis

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What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an infection of the tissue (called the “meninges”) that surrounds the brain and spinal cord.

What are the symptoms of meningitis?

Symptoms of meningitis may appear suddenly. Fever, severe and constant headache, stiff neck or neck pain, nausea and vomiting, sensitivity to light, and rash can all be signs of meningitis. Changes in behavior such as confusion, sleepiness, and trouble waking up can also be important symptoms. In some infants, the only signs of meningitis may be crankiness or tiredness and poor feeding. Babies with meningitis usually run a fever, but not always. Anyone who has or observes these symptoms should contact a health care provider right away. Some cases of meningitis are very serious, leading to permanent neurologic problems, amputation of limbs, loss of hearing, seizures or strokes, and even death.

What causes meningitis?

Many different kinds of viruses and bacteria (germs) can cause meningitis. A sample of spinal fluid, usually collected by a spinal tap, is needed to find out if someone has meningitis and to see what caused it.

What kinds of bacteria can cause meningitis?

Neisseria meningitidis are bacteria that can cause illness in people of any age. At any time, about 5-15% of people have these bacteria in their throats or noses without getting sick. The bacteria are spread through saliva (spit) during kissing, sharing of food, drinks or cigarettes (including e-cigarettes), and by close contact with infected people who are sneezing or coughing. People who have come in close contact with the saliva of a person with meningitis from this type of bacteria may have to get antibiotics (medicine) for protection. Meningitis caused by these bacteria is called “meningococcal.” There are vaccines, which can be used to help prevent this kind of meningitis.

Haemophilus influenzae type b bacteria, called Hib, can also cause meningitis. There is a vaccine called “Hib vaccine” that prevents infants and young children from getting Hib disease. Most adults are resistant to this type of meningitis, and thanks to the vaccine, most children under 5 years of age are protected. Certain people who have come in close contact with the saliva of a person with meningitis from this type of bacteria may have to get an antibiotic to protect unimmunized, under-immunized or immunocompromised children in their household.

Streptococcus pneumoniae are bacteria that cause lung and ear infections but can also cause “pneumococcal” meningitis. These bacteria are usually found in the throat. Most people who have these bacteria in their throats stay healthy. However, people with chronic medical problems or with weakened immune systems, and those who are very young or very old, are at higher risk for getting pneumococcal meningitis. Meningitis caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* is not spread from person-to-person. People in close contact with someone who has pneumococcal meningitis do not need to get antibiotics.

Other bacteria can also cause meningitis, but meningitis from these other bacteria is much less common and usually not contagious.

What about viruses?

Viral meningitis, also called **aseptic meningitis**, is much more common than bacterial meningitis. A group of viruses called *enteroviruses* is the most common cause of viral meningitis. These viruses are found in the throat and feces (stool) of infected people. The virus is most likely to be spread when people do not wash their hands after using the toilet or changing a diaper or soiled sheets, then touch their own mouths, prepare food for others, or touch others with their contaminated hands. These viruses can also be spread by the kind of close face-to-face contact that is common in families.

Many enteroviruses don't cause people to feel very sick. Others may cause only mild diarrhea or vomiting. People with viral meningitis are usually less sick than people with bacterial meningitis. They usually get better on their own. People who are close contacts of viral meningitis patients do not need to be treated with antibiotics. However, they should wash their hands often with soap and warm water or use alcohol-based hand rubs or gels to stop the spread of these viruses. There are usually more cases of viral meningitis in the late summer and early fall.

How is meningitis spread?

Many of the viruses that cause meningitis are spread through saliva (spit) or feces (stool). The bacteria that can cause meningitis are usually spread from person-to-person through contact with infected saliva. Most people may already have immunity (natural protection) against many of these germs.

How can meningitis be prevented?

If a person is exposed to the saliva of someone with meningitis caused by certain types of bacteria, public health officials or your health care provider may recommend an antibiotic to prevent disease.

Frequent handwashing with soap and water or use of alcohol-based hand rubs or gels can help stop the spread of many viruses and bacteria. Not sharing food, drinks, or eating utensils with other people can also help stop the spread of germs.

There are 5 vaccines that can help prevent meningitis:

- ***Haemophilus influenzae* (Hib) vaccine** is usually given at 2, 4, 6 and between 12 and 15 months of age. The total number of doses depends on the age at which the series was begun. Children over 5 years of age usually do not need this vaccine. But, some older children or adults with special health conditions should get it.
- **Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine 13-valent (PCV13)** is recommended for all children less than 24 months old. It is usually given at 2, 4, 6, and between 12 and 15 months of age. The total number of doses depends on the age at which the series was begun. It is also used in high-risk people 2 years of age and older. This vaccine is recommended to be given as a first dose in a series with PPSV23 vaccine, for everyone 65 years of age and older.
- **Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine 23-valent (PPSV23)** is used in high-risk individuals 2 years of age or older. (High-risk children less than 5 years of age should also receive PCV13.) This vaccine is also recommended to be given as the second dose in a series with PCV13 for everyone 65 years of age and older.

- **Quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine** (Menactra and Menveo) is recommended for children 11-12 years of age and for some younger children with certain health conditions like asplenia (including sickle cell disease), or prior to travel to certain parts of the world where meningococcal disease is common. A second dose of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine is routinely recommended at 16 years of age. Adolescents and young adults who have not been vaccinated according to routine recommendations should talk to their healthcare provider about vaccination according to the “catch up” schedule.

College freshmen, military recruits and other newly enrolled college students living in dormitories who are not yet vaccinated are also recommended to receive meningococcal conjugate vaccine.

- **Meningococcal serogroup B vaccine** (Bexsero and Trumenba) is recommended for people with certain relatively rare high-risk health conditions age 10 or older (examples: persons with a damaged spleen or whose spleen has been removed, those with persistent complement component deficiency (an inherited disorder), microbiologists working with *N. meningitidis*, and people who may have been exposed during an outbreak). Adolescents and young adults (16 through 23 years of age) who are not at high risk **may** also be vaccinated with a serogroup B meningococcal vaccine, preferably at 16 through 18 years of age, to provide short term protection for most strains of serogroup B meningococcal disease.

Talk with your doctor about which vaccines you or your child should receive.

Are students required to get meningococcal vaccine?

Yes. Massachusetts law requires the following students receive quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine (unless they qualify for one of the exemptions allowed by the law):

- Secondary school (those schools with grade 9-12): newly enrolled full-time students who will be living in a dormitory or other congregate housing licensed or approved by the secondary school must provide documentation of having received a dose of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine at any time in the past.
- Postsecondary institutions (e.g., colleges): newly enrolled full-time students 21 years of age and younger must provide documentation of having received a dose of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine on or after their 16th birthday, regardless of housing status.

More information may be found in the MDPH documents “*Meningococcal Disease and College Students*” and “*Information about Meningococcal Disease, Meningococcal Vaccines, Vaccination Requirements and the Waiver for Students at Colleges and Residential Schools.*”

Shouldn't meningococcal B vaccine be required?

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has reviewed the available data regarding serogroup B meningococcal disease and the vaccines. At the current time, there is no routine recommendation and no statewide requirement for meningococcal B vaccination before going to college (although some colleges might decide to have such a requirement). As noted previously, adolescents and young adults (16 through 23 years of age) may be vaccinated with a serogroup B meningococcal vaccine, preferably at 16 through 18 years of age, to provide short term protection against most strains of serogroup B meningococcal disease. This would be a decision between a healthcare provider and a patient. These policies may change as new information becomes available.

Where can I get more information about meningitis?

- **Your health care provider**
- **The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800 or on the MDPH website at <http://www.mass.gov/dph/>**
- **Your local health department (listed in the phone book under government)**