

September 4, 2007

Dear Tully C. Knoles families:

This weekend, one of our Tully C. Knoles students was diagnosed with viral meningitis. San Joaquin County Public Health Services representatives have advised us that this is a relatively common, rarely serious infection of the fluid in the spinal cord and the fluid that surrounds the brain. It is not to be confused with the more serious bacterial meningitis.

Here are answers to frequently asked questions regarding viral meningitis:

What are the signs and symptoms of viral meningitis?

Symptoms are fever, headache, stiff neck and tiredness. Rash, sore throat and vomiting can also occur.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

Symptoms generally appear within one week of exposure. Illness usually lasts less than ten days, and people usually recover completely without complications.

How is viral meningitis diagnosed?

Viral meningitis is diagnosed by blood tests.

How common is viral meningitis?

Viral meningitis is relatively common. Almost all cases occur as single, isolated events. Outbreaks are rare.

How can viral meningitis be prevented?

- Pay careful attention to personal hygiene. Hand washing helps prevent infection with many of the viruses that can cause viral meningitis. Wash hands with soap and warm water after using the toilet, after changing diapers, before preparing and eating food, and after sneezing and coughing.
- Avoid mosquito bites. If possible, stay inside between dusk and dark. This is when most types of mosquitoes are active.

We do not expect that the well-being of our Tully C. Knoles students and staff has been compromised. However, if your child develops any of the symptoms listed above between now and this Thursday, September 6, you should consult your medical provider immediately. It will be important to notify the provider of your child's possible exposure.

If you have questions about meningococcal infection or preventive treatment, please call San Joaquin County Public Health Communicable Disease Program at (209) 468-0354 or 468-3822.

Sincerely,

Kirk Nicholas, Ph.D.
Principal

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