



**Parent Handbook**  
**Summer 2026**

# Table of Contents

---

➤ Director's Note	Page 2
➤ Pre-Camp Checklist	Page 3
➤ Important Camp Dates	Page 3
➤ For New Families	Page 4-5
➤ Camper Forms	Page 6
➤ Communication During Camp	Page 6
➤ Mail	Page 7
➤ Photos	Page 8
➤ Arrival & Departure Days	Page 8
➤ Intersession	Page 9
➤ Daily Schedule	Page 9
➤ Health Center	Page 10
➤ Medications	Page 10-11
➤ Program Calendar	Page 12
➤ Packing for Camp	Page 13
➤ Packing Lists	Page 14-16
➤ Screen Free Policy	Page 17
➤ Meningococcal Disease	Page 18-19

# Directors' Note

---

Dear Emerson Families,

Welcome to another exciting season at Camp Emerson! As the Camp Director, we are thrilled to extend a warm welcome to both returning and new families. Summer camp holds a special place in the hearts of many, and we are honored to be a part of your child's summer adventure. At Camp Emerson, we understand the profound impact that camp experiences can have on children and families alike. From fostering independence and resilience to nurturing creativity and building lifelong friendships, the impact of camp extends far beyond the summer months.

Camp is a place where children can disconnect from screens and reconnect with nature, allowing them to explore and discover the wonders of the great outdoors. Through engaging outdoor activities, from hiking and swimming to campfire songs and stargazing, campers develop a deep appreciation for the natural world and learn valuable skills that will stay with them for years to come. Moreover, camp provides a safe and supportive environment where children can step outside of their comfort zones, take healthy risks, and build confidence as they tackle new challenges in a supportive environment. As your child embarks on this exciting journey, rest assured that our dedicated staff are committed to providing a nurturing environment where every camper can thrive and shine.

We understand that sending your child to camp can be a significant decision, and we are here to support you every step of the way. Whether you have questions about our forms, policies, or preparing for camp, please don't hesitate to reach out to our team. We are honored to welcome you to the Emerson family this summer and we look forward to creating unforgettable memories together!

Positively,



Tony Oyenarte  
Director



# Pre-Camp Checklist

---

- Review Family Handbook
- Complete all forms in [Campminder](#) by May 15th**
- Doctor's Report & Immunization
- Schedule Physical, upload forms by May 15<sup>th</sup>*
- Download [Campanion](#)
- Familiarize Yourself with CampMinder Email
- Review the Camp Emerson Packing List
- Make Medication Plan (Mail or Bring to Camp)
- Order Emerson Clothing with [Camp Spot](#)

## Important Camp Dates

---

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| ★ Wednesday, May 6    | New Family Orientation (Zoom Call, For Adults)   |
| ★ Thursday, May 15    | Camper Forms Due   |
| ★ Sunday, May 31      | Camper Orientation (Zoom Call, For All Campers)  |
| ★ Saturday, June 6    | Open House ( <a href="#">RSVP</a> )  |
| ★ Sunday, June 21     | First Day of Camp  |
| ★ Wednesday, August 5 | Summer 2027 Registration Open  |
| ★ Saturday, August 8  | Last Day of Camp   |
| ★ Sunday, November 1  | Early Registration Deadline<br><i>Families receive a Financial Discount and an Early Enrollment Gift</i> |

# For New Families

---

Selecting a camp and preparing for the summer is an exciting process. You may have as many questions as you have reasons for giving your camper the gift of a summer at Camp Emerson. This section is intended to be a resource for your family, and especially for those new to sleepaway camp.

## Talk With Your Child

Campers and parents feel many emotions as they prepare for summer camp – excited, happy, curious! It is also normal and healthy for difficult feelings to arise. Ask your child how they are feeling about camp. Validate any “hard” feelings and reassure them that camp will be a positive experience. Talking together can help your child process their emotions while also helping them transition to camp with confidence.

## What To Say

When talking to a child who is nervous about attending overnight camp it is important to stay positive, confident, and reassure them of your love and their safety at camp. The following might be helpful things to say:

- “We know how to contact Camp Emerson and they know how to contact me.”
- “While you are at camp we will be at \_\_\_\_\_ and we will write to you regularly.”
- “I love you! I’m very excited and happy that you are going to Camp Emerson.”
- “I know you’ll love many things about camp.”
- “It’s ok to miss me. I’ll miss you too! But don’t sit out on activities because you miss me.”
- “It is ok to feel nervous about camp! Everyone is nervous, especially their first time. What is one thing you are looking forward to at camp?”
- “At home we have only\_\_\_ adults looking after you. At camp there are almost 100 adults around to make sure you’re safe, making friends, and having fun.
- “I can’t wait to hear about all of your activities and friends when you get home!

## What Not To Say

Some strategies make it harder for children to transition to camp. Please avoid telling your child the following things:

- “We can pick you up early if you don’t like camp.”
- “Just try camp for a few days! If you don’t like it we’ll pick you up.”
- “I’ll give you a cell phone so you can call me any time.”
- “We’re going on vacation, so you have to go to camp.”

## Before Camp

The more information kids have about camp before their arrival, the easier they will adjust to camp. Children should know that they will be part of a bunk, what the lodging will be like, that they will share

responsibility for keeping their living areas clean, that there are scheduled activities, etc. If your child asks a question you can't answer, call us! We're happy to give you more information and discuss strategies to help your child successfully transition to camp. Here are a few strategies to support your camper:

- **Simulate Camp At Home.** Especially supportive for younger campers! Make preparation for camp a family bonding opportunity. Camp out in the living room! Share highs and lows at the end of the day. Arrange a sleepover with a friend so your child can experience sleeping outside their home. Have a night where everyone sleeps in a sleeping bag!
- **Visit Camp.** Visit if possible! This is an opportunity for you to meet our staff, tour camp, ask questions, and build excitement. We are also happy to come meet you at your home, video chat, or talk on the phone. Call or email us to arrange a meeting.
- **Provide Camp Emerson With Complete Information.** It is imperative that camp has complete, accurate information about any emotional, behavioral, medical, or physical situations your camper may be experiencing. Withholding such information handicaps our ability to effectively care for your camper. Disclosure significantly increases your camper's chances for success and happiness at camp. We take confidentiality very seriously and take many measures to protect your camper's information.
- **Limit Screen Time Before Camp.** Virtual experiences (social media, video games, etc.) release dopamine, a hormone that causes humans to feel pleasure. The more dopamine released in the brain, the more addicting a device or game, and the less appealing or dull the real world can seem afterwards. Intense video games can especially trigger the release of large amounts of cortisol and adrenaline. This can fatigue the prefrontal cortex, impairing children's ability to make decisions and regulate emotions, two skills essential for navigating the complex landscape of summer camp. Furthermore, kids can feel discomfort when transitioning from heavy screen time to screen free spaces. We suggest limiting screen time in the week leading up to camp to ensure your child is as comfortable and engaged as possible when they arrive on check-in day.

## How To Say Goodbye

Saying goodbye to your child at camp is a precious and personal moment. Many parents suddenly feel emotional when this moment arrives. This is good! It means you love and care for your child very much. When saying goodbye, it is important to focus on how to best transition your camper to their first moments without you at camp. Here are some suggestions:

- **Express your love.** Your love is critical to your camper's self-esteem and self-confidence.
- **Be confident and positive about the camp experience.** If you express doubts about leaving them, they will have doubts about leaving you.
- **Practice.** If you know that saying goodbye to your child will be hard for you, that's ok! Practicing what you will say with a partner, friend, or another family member will be helpful when the moment arrives.

- **Keep goodbyes short.** Long goodbyes are hard and often end up being difficult for campers. If a longer goodbye feels needed, you can do an activity before you arrive, like go out for breakfast, to ensure you get enough quality time together on check-in day.

## Camper Forms

---

### Forms Due by May 15

Submitting your forms on time helps Emerson provide the best possible care for your child. We spend hours organizing the information provided by these forms. Thank you in advance for submitting your forms in a timely manner. You can access your forms in the following places:



**The Campanian App**

[Download Here](#)

*Mobile*



**Campminder**

[Access Here](#)

*Desktop*

**All forms must be submitted by May 15 for all sessions.** If you need help navigating the forms process or have any questions, please contact our office. We would be happy to support you!

## Communication During Camp

---

**Office Hours:** 8:30 am to 6:00 pm

**Office Phone:** (413) 655-8123

**Email:** hello@campemerson.com

**Health Center Phone:** 413-251-0226

**Health Center Email:** health@campemerson.com

### Contacting Camp

We are in constant communication with our families at camp. Please reach out to us for any reason! We are happy to give you an update on your child's experience while they are in our care. We aim to return all phone and email communications the same day. When an email or phone call arrives later in the day, we will usually return communication the following morning.

### Phone Calls for Multisession Campers

Campers staying for multiple sessions who are NOT picked up by a family or friend during Intersession will have the opportunity to call home between sessions **on Saturday and Sunday mornings between sessions**. We do not facilitate phone calls during a one or two-week session.

*The only phone calls we schedule during camp are birthday phone calls.*

# Mail

---

## Writing to Campers

Campers love mail! We encourage you to write often – you can even mail a letter before camp begins. Mail is distributed daily after lunch. **Mail will reach your child even if you do not know their bunk!** Please send all letters to the following address:

Camper Name & Bunk  
Camp Emerson  
PO Box 808  
Hinsdale, MA 01235-0808

*\*Please see our **No Package Policy** on the next page*

## Email Your Child

In your [Campminder](#) account, click on “One-Way Email” to send an email to your child. CampMinder’s one-way email is programmed to only receive emails from registered parents/guardians and their invited guests. This email service is FREE to all Emerson families. We deliver mail daily to campers after lunch.

## No Package Policy

Camp itself is a gift! In an effort to reduce pressure on parents to send packages and to avoid setting campers apart into the “Haves” and “Have-nots,” we have a No Package Policy. No boxes will be accepted at camp.

We will accept large size flat envelopes (8x11 or 11x14) that **contain only books** (we love reading). If your child has forgotten something, please contact us before sending anything so we can approve the item. All large envelopes will be opened / inspected. Do not send any food. Your camper will not be able to receive it. **Camp Emerson is not responsible for items to campers in packages.**

For campers with birthdays DURING camp, a birthday package will be permitted that does not contain any food items. Again, these boxes will be opened and inspected for food.

*\*\*Please share this No Package Policy with family and friends.*

# Photos

---

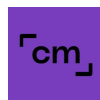
Each day of camp, we upload many photos of campers engaged in a variety of activities. **Do not expect to see your child in photos every day** - especially if your child is “photo shy”. The goal of photos is to give families a sense of what life is like at camp. Again, photos can be viewed on mobile with Campanion or online with Campminder



**The Campanion App**

[Download Here](#)

*Mobile*



**Campminder**

[Access Here](#)

*Desktop*

## Arrival & Departure Days

---

Families have the option of dropping off their child at camp or signing up for transportation from West Harrison or Newton. Transportation service is an additional cost of \$115 each way. Campers are transported in a bus or a camp van.

### Bus Schedule

Origin	Destination	Departure	Arrival
Newton, MA	Camp	10:00 am**	1:00 pm
West Harrison, NY	Camp	9:45 am**	1:00 pm
Camp	Newton, MA	9:00 am	12:00 pm
Camp	West Harrison, NY	9:00 am	12:15 pm

*\*\*Please arrive 30 minutes early for buses going to camp.*

**Newton:** Newton South High School Parking Lot | [Location on Google Maps](#)

**West Harrison:** CampGroup Office, 4 New King Street | [Location On Google Maps](#)

### Drop Off & Pick Up Times At Camp

If traveling by car, please pick up or drop off your child in the following windows:

When	Drop Off / Pick Up Times
Arrival Days (June 21, July 5, 19, August 2)	1:00-3:00 pm
Departure Days (July 4, 18, Aug 1, 8)	9:30-10:45 am

# Interession

---

For campers who are attending multiple sessions, you have a few options for interession, the time between sessions.

- **Stay At Camp!** We take campers for an off camp afternoon.
- **Saturday Return:** Pick up your child on Saturday and return them to camp the same day between 4:00-5:00 pm
- **Sunday Return:** Pick up your child on Saturday and return them to camp between 12:00-1:00 pm on Sunday.

# Daily Schedule

---

Below is the daily schedule. This schedule changes during our special event days, which typically take place on the middle Sunday of each session. Our camp operates on an “A/B” schedule, allowing campers to participate in 8 activities over two weeks. Campers who stay for multiple sessions can request new activities at the end of each session.

7:30	Wake-Up
7:50	Morning Gathering
8:00	Breakfast
8:45	Cabin Cleanup & Morning Meds
9:15 - 10:15	Period 1
10:15	Morning Snack
10:30 - 11:30	Period 2
11:45 - 12:45	Period 3
12:45	Lunch
1:45	Rest Hour
3:00 - 4:00	Period 4
4:00	Afternoon Snack
4:15 - 5:00	Campers Choice
5:45	Evening Gathering
6:00	Dinner
6:45	Bunk Time
7:20	Evening Program
8:10	Snack
8:20	Evening Meds
9:30	Lights Out

# Health Center

---

The Camp Emerson Health Center is staffed by skilled and caring professionals. We employ a staff of onsite nurses and a physician who supervises the team and sees campers as needed. Together with the Directors, they oversee all health concerns at camp.

Most camp injuries are very minor and require simple first aid. If a camper requires more immediate medical attention, Camp Emerson is just 10 from an Urgent Care facility, and 18 minutes away from the a Hospital (Berkshire Medical Center).

We aim to call parents as soon as possible to report on health-related issues. If an issue arises late at night, we notify parents early the following morning, unless the situation is urgent. We will call your family in the event of the following:

- Overnight stay in the health center
- Off-camp medical trip
- Need of new prescription medication
- We have a general medical question or concern about your camper
- True medical emergency

## Medical Examination

All campers are required to submit a medical examination within 12 months of their end date at camp.

**You can use a physical obtained for school!** We have provided a form for you in case you need to obtain an updated physical. We know these visits are sometimes hard to schedule. Please call your health care provider now to set up an appointment and keep in contact with the camp about when we can expect your medical forms.

## Note About Specialists

If your child sees a Specialist for a chronic condition (allergy, asthma, psychiatry, gastric, endocrinologist or other medication), a separate report should be sent in with the pediatrician's report.

# Medications

---

Camp Emerson is licensed by the Massachusetts Board of Health, which requires us to follow strict regulations when dispensing medications. All medication, both prescription or over-the-counter (OTC), is stored and dispensed at the Health Center. **No medications of any kind can be kept in the bunks.**

Vitamins, herbal supplements, homeopathic, essential oils and other remedies are not considered "medication" and will not be dispensed at camp.

## Getting Medication to Camp

<b>1</b>	<b>Fill Out “Health History” Form.</b> Medications that are not entered into this form cannot be administered.
<b>2</b>	<b>Ship Medication:</b> We receive packages as early as June 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2026.
<b>3</b>	<b>Provide Enough Medication:</b> Provide enough pills/liquid to cover dosage for your child’s stay at camp, including arrival and departure day
<b>4</b>	<b>Original Containers:</b> All medications must be in their original containers. Medicine not in their original containers will not be administered.
<b>5</b>	<b>Refrigerated Medication, Epipens, Inhalers, Schedule II Drugs:</b> Refrigerated medication, epipens, inhalers, and Schedule II drugs <b>should be brought</b> to camp with your camper on arrival day.
<b>6</b>	<b>Shipping Instructions:</b> You must have a trackable service. For UPS and FedEx you must mail the package to our street address: <p style="text-align: center;">Camp Emerson Attention: Health Center 212 Longview Avenue Hinsdale, MA 01235</p>

# Program Calendar

---

Below is a basic outline of our program calendar for a two-week session. Campers are assigned eight electives: four on “A Day” and four on “B Day”.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Arrival Day	A Electives	B Electives	A Electives	B Electives	S Day	A Electives
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
B Electives	A Electives	B Electives	S Day	A Electives	B Electives	Departure Day

## Special Event Days (S Days)

Twice a session we pause our normal programming for Special Event Days. On these days campers sleep an hour later and there are special food items and snacks. The Special Events are unique to each session.

## Activity Selection

Before every session campers will fill out an *Activity Selection Form*. They will rank their preferences on this form and then our staff will make every camper a schedule. We review each schedule individually to ensure campers are given their top choices. Once campers arrive at camp they are able to change their schedule. Campers who attend multiple sessions will fill out a new form while they are at camp.

## Session 4

The program calendar changes slightly for our one week session. Campers participate in one set of electives and enjoy a Special Event Day in the middle of the week.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Arrival Day	A Electives	A Electives	A Electives	A Electives	S Day	Departure

# Packing for Camp

---

Packing for camp can be an exciting time, and if left to the last minute, a stressful one. We suggest reviewing the packing list a few weeks in advance with your child and making a list of needed items. You know your child best. They may need more of an item than suggested, or less of another. Please use the packing list as a guide.

## Luggage

All luggage must be contained in 1-2 duffle bags or suitcases and 1 small backpack. Label all your luggage in multiple places. Avoid heavy luggage: trunks, super-sized luggage, etc. If you have trouble lifting your luggage, then our staff will have trouble helping you.

## Label Everything

Write your camper's **first and last name on everything**. This includes all clothes, luggage, water bottles, gear, laundry bags, shower totes, linens, sleeping bags, and footwear. Unmarked items are nearly impossible to reunite with their owners when lost. A list of items pinned inside of luggage will help campers remember what they brought to camp when it comes time to pack and go home.

## Laundry

For two-week campers, laundry goes out once and is returned the next day. For four-week campers, laundry is done 3 times in 4 weeks. We have an excellent laundry service that does each camper's laundry individually. Send 2 laundry bags with your child's name clearly marked on the bag.

## Clothing Supplier

We are transitioning to a new clothing supplier this summer. **Camp Spot** is the official place to purchase Camp Emerson clothing, gear, and other merchandise. We expect our merchandise page to be live at the end of February.

## Personal Property

The camp is not responsible for the loss of or damage to personal property, including laundry service. Please do not send anything with significant financial or sentimental value to camp.

# Packing List | 2, 4, 6, or 7 Weeks

---

## Clothing

- 10 t-shirts
- 8 shorts
- 10 underwear
- 8 bras
- 10 pairs of socks
- 3 long-sleeve fleeces or sweatshirts
- 3 long pants (jeans, sweatpants, etc.)
- 2 bathing suits or swim trunks
- 2 sets of pajamas
- 1 hat for sun protection
- 1 rain jacket
- "Dress Up Clothes" for Bruch, Dance, etc.
- 1 bathrobe (optional)
- 1 white t-shirt for tie dye (optional)
- Creative clothing, costumes, funny t-shirts, etc. are encouraged
- Session 2:** Blue, Green, Yellow, Red Shirt for Color War
- Session 3:** Blue & Yellow Shirt for Olympics

## Footwear

- 2 pairs of sneakers or sturdy shoes
- 2 pairs of sandals
- Hiking shoes (optional)
- 1 pair rain boots (optional)

## Bedding & Linen

- 2 twin-fitted sheets
- 2 twin top sheets
- 1 warm blanket or quilt (washable)
- 1 pillow
- 2 pillowcases
- 2 beach towels
- 2 bath towels

## Think About

book, journal, costumes, playing cards, musical instruments, sports equipment

## Equipment/Supplies

- 2 large laundry bags
- 2 water bottles
- 1 flashlight w/ extra batteries
- 1 fan - battery only (optional)
- 1 backpack
- 1 extra eyeglasses/contacts/solution
- Stationary, postcards, self-assessed stamped envelopes, for 6-10 letters
- pens or writing utensils
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- 1 wristwatch
- swimming goggles

## Toiletries

- 1 toothbrush and holder
- 1 toothpaste
- 1 shampoo/conditioner
- 1 soap and container
- 1 nail clipper
- 1 comb/brush, hair accessories
- 1 sunscreen
- 1 insect repellent
- tampons, pads, etc.
- 1 portable shower caddy

## Leave At Home

- ALL electronics\*\*
- ALL food & jewelry & money
- Chairs, roller blades, skateboards
- Expensive / sentimental items
- Dangerous Items, including any knives, axes, etc.

\*\*See next page for electronics policy

# Packing List | 1 Week

---

## Clothing

- 6 t-shirts
- 6 shorts
- 6 underwear
- 6 bras
- 6 pairs of socks
- 2 long-sleeve fleeces or sweatshirts
- 2 long pants (jeans, sweatpants, etc.)
- 1 bathing suits or swim trunks
- 1 sets of pajamas
- 1 hat for sun protection
- 1 rain jacket
- "Dress Up Clothes" for Bruch, Dance, etc.
- Creative clothing, costumes, funny t-shirts, etc. are encouraged
- 1 bathrobe (optional)
- 1 white t-shirt for tie dye (optional)

## Footwear

- 2 pairs of sneakers or sturdy shoes
- 1 pairs of sandals
- Hiking shoes (optional)
- 1 pair rain boots (optional)

## Bedding & Linen

- 1 twin-fitted sheets
- 1 twin top sheets
- 1 warm blanket or quilt (washable)
- 1 pillow
- 1 pillowcases
- 1 beach towels
- 1 bath towels

## Think About

book, journal, costumes, playing cards, musical instruments, sports equipment

## Equipment/Supplies

- 1 large laundry bags
- 1 water bottles
- 1 flashlight w/ extra batteries
- 1 fan - battery only (optional)
- 1 backpack
- 1 extra eyeglasses/contacts/solution
- Stationary, postcards, self-assessed stamped envelopes, for 6-10 letters
- pens or writing utensils
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- 1 wristwatch
- swimming goggles

## Toiletries

- 1 toothbrush and holder
- 1 toothpaste
- 1 shampoo/conditioner
- 1 soap and container
- 1 nail clipper
- 1 comb/brush, hair accessories
- 1 sunscreen
- 1 insect repellent
- tampons, pads, etc.
- 1 portable shower caddy

## Leave At Home

- ALL electronics\*\*
- ALL food & jewelry & money
- Chairs, roller blades, skateboards
- Expensive / sentimental items
- Dangerous Items, including any knives, axes, etc.

\*\*See next page for electronics policy

# Screen Free Policy

---

At camp, technology interferes with our mission to promote connection to nature and build healthy social connections. When you sign your child up for Camp Emerson you are not only giving them the gift of camp, you are also giving them the gift of two-weeks without digital technology.

**Not Allowed** - The following electronics are NOT allowed at camp:

- Internet: Any device equipped with Internet, WIFI or 3G/4G/5G capability
- Phones: Cell phones, smart phones, any type of phone
- Apple: iPads, iTouch, iAnythings, smartwatches
- Video: Video cameras, Video Players or Recording Devices
- Audio: Radios, portable speakers, anything with video or Internet capability
- Other: Laptops, electronic games/toys, walkie-talkies, etc.

**Allowed** - The following electronics are allowed at camp

- Digital or Analog Watches (but not Smart Watches)
- MP3 Player without video AND Internet capability
- Basic cameras without internet capability
- Personal fan (battery powered)
- E-readers for books only

Any unapproved electronics found at camp will be confiscated, kept in our camp safe, and returned on departure day.

## Thinking Of Giving Your Child A Cell Phone?

If you give your child a cell phone, this unfortunately puts your child in a very uncomfortable position. Bunk staff normally find cell phones. When this happens, many campers think they've let down their parents (because the cell phone was found) and let down camp (because they brought a cell phone) and feel shame. If given a cell phone, campers will feel pressure to be in touch with their parents during camp. This leads to anxiety, in part because they actively hide it from other campers and staff. It's a no-win situation. While many parents think that a cell phone will give them peace of mind. However it usually doesn't and it negatively impacts your child's camp experience. **Please - do not send your child to camp with a cell phone.**

# **MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE**

---

The Board of Health requires us to provide you with information about Meningococcal Disease.

## **What is meningococcal disease?**

Meningococcal disease is caused by infection with bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. These bacteria can infect the tissue (the “meninges”) that surrounds the brain and spinal cord and cause meningitis, or they may infect the blood or other organs of the body. In the US, about 1,000-3,000 people get meningococcal disease each year and 10-15% die despite receiving antibiotic treatment. Of those who survive, about 11-19% may lose limbs, become deaf, have problems with their nervous system, become mentally retarded, or have seizures or strokes.

## **How is meningococcal disease spread?**

These bacteria are passed from person-to-person through saliva (spit). You must be in close contact with an infected person’s saliva in order for the bacteria to spread. Close contact includes activities such as kissing, sharing water bottles, sharing eating/drinking utensils or sharing cigarettes with someone who is infected; or being within 3-6 feet of someone who is infected and is coughing and sneezing.

## **Who is at most risk for getting meningococcal disease?**

People who travel to certain parts of the world where the disease is very common are at risk for meningococcal disease. Children and adults with damaged or removed spleens or an inherited immune disorder (called “terminal complement component deficiency”) are also at risk. People who live in settings such as college dormitories are also at greater risk of disease.

## **Are camp attendees at increased risk for meningococcal disease?**

Children attending day or residential camps are not considered to be at an increased risk for meningococcal disease because of their participation.

## **Is there a vaccine against meningococcal disease?**

There are currently 2 vaccines available in the US that protect against 4 of the most common of the 13 serogroups (subgroups) of *N. meningitidis* that cause serious disease. Protection with the meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine lasts about 3 to 5 years. A meningococcal vaccine (conjugate vaccine), which was licensed in January 2005, is expected to help decrease disease transmission and to provide more long-term protection.

## **Should my child receive meningococcal vaccine?**

Meningococcal vaccine is not recommended for attendance at camps. However, this vaccine is recommended for certain age groups; contact your child’s health care provider. In addition, parents of children who are at higher risk of infection, because of certain medical conditions or other circumstances, should discuss vaccination with their child’s healthcare provider.

### **How can I protect my child from getting meningococcal disease?**

The best protection against meningococcal disease and many other infectious diseases is thorough and frequent handwashing, respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette. Individuals should:

1. Wash their hands often, especially after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food (hands should be washed with soap and water or an alcohol based hand gel or rub may be used if hands are not visibly dirty);
2. Cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and discard the tissue in a trash can; or if they don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve.
3. Not share food, drinks or eating utensils with other people, especially if they are ill.