

Fells Forest Camp

Parent Handbook

2025



Last updated on June 30, 2025, **Camp Phone Number: 781-662-2340, Ex 103**

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Welcome!

Dear Parents,

Hello and welcome to Fells Forest Camp! We are thrilled you have chosen Fells Forest Camp as an exciting and immersive nature experience for your child this summer.

In this handbook you will find everything regarding logistics, policies, and essential information needed for a fun and safe summer. Our priority is the safety and happiness of campers and staff, and this packet outlines many of our procedures and policies that help keep our camp community safe and prepared for a week in the woods.

I am looking forward to an amazing summer!

Warm regards,

Liz Cohen
Camp and Youth Development Director
(781) 662-2340, Ex 103
forestcamp@fells.org

What to Expect at Camp

The Middlesex Fells is a magical place to discover the wonders of nature in a safe and nurturing environment. A session spent at Fells Forest Camp means that your child will learn about the forest from their observations and experiences as they dig in the dirt, go on scavenger hunts, build forts and fairy houses, splash in streams, and play games. Your child will not only develop a personal connection with nature and a deeper understanding of the forest, they will make new friends and grow their confidence as they expand their understanding of the natural world.

Our Staff

We have a highly dedicated staff and maintain low camper-to-counselor ratios to allow for small group learning. Trained and qualified camp counselors strive to build a connection between young people and the natural world through hands-on learning, nature activities, games, and crafts. Staff are carefully selected based on their maturity, enthusiasm, youth experience, and a deep commitment to teaching young people about the natural world. You can expect your child's counselors to be welcoming, engaged, and willing to have open and honest communication with you regarding your child's day-to-day experience.

Our staff consists of high school and college students, and skilled professionals, age 15 and above. The required staff to camper ratio is 1:5 for campers ages 4-6 years and 1:10 for campers 7 and above, though Fells Forest Camp typically maintains a 1-5 ratio for all groups.

Safety

All staff have undergone a Massachusetts criminal and sexual background check, and undergo a national background check. All staff are certified in CPR and First Aid. Individual campers are never left alone with staff as we maintain a "rule of three" at all times during the camp day; meaning that the minimum number of people must be three when doing an activity or going anywhere during camp.

Medical Staff

Camp has three Healthcare Supervisors who are trained by our physician to respond to medical situations.

Refunds and Cancellation Policy

Refunds:

Friends of the Fells requires a **non-refundable deposit** at the time of registration:

- Half Day programs: \$50.00 non-refundable deposit for every canceled session
- Full Day programs: \$100.00 non-refundable deposit for every canceled session

-If a registration is canceled by March 31st, Fells Forest Camp will refund the full registration, excluding the non-refundable deposit.

-If a registration is canceled between April 1st and May 31st, Friends of the Fells will refund 50% of the registration, excluding the non-refundable deposit.

-If a registration is canceled after May 31st, no refund will be offered.

Transfers:

All session transfer requests will be accommodated at no charge, as long as space is available. Please contact us as soon as you know of a scheduling conflict and we will work with you to reschedule your child's summer camp experience to the best of our ability.

In circumstances where a single age group is under-subscribed, we may merge that cohort with another cohort of another age group. In the rare case of under-enrollment for an entire week of programming, we will cancel programming for that week. In such cases, we will fully refund your camp registration fee. If a camp session must be canceled due to a state order (dangerous weather, emergency situations, etc.), we will contact you to explore rescheduling options. If your child's camp experience cannot be rescheduled, we will promptly issue you a full refund (for loss of a full-week camp session) or prorate your refund for individual day(s) of camp lost.

Extreme Heat Closures

For the safety of our camp community, in cases of extreme heat, with a heat index of 97 degrees or over, we reserve the right to cancel camp for a full or half day. While we do have access to a few rooms with air conditioning, there are not enough rooms available to accommodate the entire camp all at once. The building itself gets quite hot and would not be comfortable for a long duration of time. Camp will only do this in very extreme instances. Last summer was the first time in camp's history that it was necessary to close camp for the day and the heat index was forecasted to be 105 degrees. **No refunds will be made available for a single day closure.**

Cancellations:

If you must cancel, and have the ability to convert all or a portion of your registration fee into a tax-deductible donation to support the Friends of the Fells we greatly appreciate your consideration. Forest Camp registrations support our work to protect the well-being of the Fells and offer safe and enjoyable recreational forest programming for everyone.

Please note that The Middlesex Fells is managed by the Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Our forest camp programming is conducted under their purview, and therefore any aspect of our camp activities in the Fells may be altered at their request.

Covid-19 Policies and Procedures

We're prepared for a safe and rewarding camp experience

The health and welfare of our campers and staff is our highest priority. We feel confident that our success in offering a safe camp experience throughout the pandemic and in the subsequent years that have followed, has prepared us to have another safe and fun summer in 2025. We monitor and adhere to all COVID-related requirements from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in our camp planning.

Fells Forest Camp is an all-outdoor camp, making it one of the safest summer camp options available. Our campers only come indoors in severe weather or other emergencies.

At this time, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is not requiring COVID-19 vaccinations for camp staff. However, the DPH encourages all camp staff to be vaccinated for COVID-19 and we have required that all staff be fully vaccinated and up to date with their booster shots by the start of camp.

Children can participate in camp activities without wearing a mask

Given the outdoor nature of our camp experience and the most recent guidance, we will allow campers to participate in camp activities without needing to wear a mask or practice physical distancing. If your child prefers to wear a mask at camp, this will be supported and welcomed. If our campers need to be escorted indoors, mask wearing will be optional.

As best practice, your child should always have a mask with them at camp, in the event of any unforeseen Covid related issues that may arise.

Symptom Checks

Every morning before leaving home, check to ensure that your child does not exhibit any of the following symptoms. If any symptoms are present, do not bring your child to camp. At morning check-in you will be asked to verify that you have completed the daily symptom checker with your child.

Symptom Checker:

- Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Recent exposure to a person with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis

Our staff will also monitor all children for symptoms throughout the day. If a child exhibits COVID symptoms or other signs of illness, we will follow all state-mandated isolation and reporting requirements.

Quarantine and Isolation

At this time, there are a number of CDC guidelines to help navigate when and how to quarantine or isolate in the event your child, family member, or other close contact has been exposed to Covid-19. Please [follow this link](#) for helpful guidance. In the event your child is exposed to Covid-19, Fells Forest Camp requires that you follow the CDC's guidelines for quarantining and isolating before being able to return to camp and that you notify Liz Cohen, Fells Forest Camp Director, immediately.

If you have any questions about our preparations related to COVID-19, please contact Liz Cohen, Fells Forest Camp Director, at liz.cohen@fells.org

Arrival and Departure

Fells Forest Camp is located at Medford High School and we use the adjacent Lawrence Woods portion of the Fells for our forest activities. All camp drop-offs and pick-ups are run from the high school at 489 Winthrop Street in Medford, either in the school cafeteria or the back corner parking lot. Please see details below for specific times and locations.

Medford High School is a great home base for our camp, with bathroom facilities, a large space to relocate campers and staff indoors in case of a weather or other emergency, and plenty of parking for drop off and pick-up. It is also immediately adjacent to the Fells, and offers great hiking and nature opportunities.

Camper Drop Off Location

Our Fells Forest Camp [Map](#) illustrates our drop-off and pick-up location (the northeast corner of the property closest to the pool) at Medford High School at 489 Winthrop Street. Park in the parking spaces facing the Fells forest and walk to our check-in area noted on the map.

We kindly request that only one parent/guardian accompany their camper during check-in (including non-camp siblings, if possible) to minimize the flow of foot traffic at this busy time.

Drop-off Times (in the parking lot, unless otherwise notified due to bad weather)

½ Day Morning and all Full Day programs (4-12 years): 9:00am

1/2 Day Afternoon Drop-off

All Age Groups: 1:00pm

Pick-Up Times and Locations

½ Day Morning Sessions: 12:00pm **(pick up children in the school cafeteria)**

½ Day Afternoon Sessions: 4:00pm **(pick up children in the school cafeteria)**

Full Day Sessions: 4:00pm (pick-up location is the same as drop-off - in parking lot)

Drop-Off /Pick-Up Procedures

Camp staff will be present in the morning to greet your child and welcome them to camp. A parent/guardian will need to sign-in your child every morning and sign them out at dismissal time before the child is allowed to leave camp.

Authorized Pick-ups and Identification

Parents/guardians indicate on our online registration form all individuals who are authorized to pick up their child. Any individual who comes to pick up a child without prior notification will not be allowed to check-out the child until our staff is able to directly contact a parent or guardian for confirmation. **Please note, we require identification from unknown adults picking up children for the first time, even if they are a parent and listed on the authorized pick up list. We reserve the right to refuse the release of any child to an unknown individual when in doubt.**

Late Pick-Up Policy

Fells Forest Camp does not offer extended day options. All campers are expected to be picked up by an authorized person at your child's scheduled pick-up time. In the event of an emergency, please contact the Camp Director immediately at 646-361-4234. Chronic late pick-ups may be grounds for extra fees or dismissal from the program.

In the event that you fail to pick up your child, the following will happen:

- All phone numbers we have on file for your child will be called.
- If no contact can be made at those numbers, we will continually assure your child that everything is ok. Your child will never be left alone with only one Fells Forest Camp staff person in attendance.
- We will notify the Program Director and call the Executive Director to determine the appropriate next steps, which may include calling police and/or social services.

Behavior Expectations

At Fells Forest Camp we strive to create a safe community where individual differences are valued, where campers and staff can accept new challenges, and where everyone can have fun. This requires the cooperation and understanding of all involved. Staff use positive reinforcement to help children build respect for themselves, their peers, and for every living creature they encounter in the forest. Fells Forest Camp operates according to a code of conduct that campers are expected to follow to help them build trust and respect among their camp cohort. Campers are asked to agree to these rules and an inability or unwillingness to follow them may be grounds for dismissal.

Camper Code of Conduct

I will behave in ways that are respectful and safe for all campers and staff. Behaving in ways that are disrespectful, threatening, or that could potentially harm (physically or emotionally) a camper or staff member is unacceptable in the Fells Forest Camp community. **Hitting, grabbing, pushing, or name-calling is never allowed at Fells Forest Camp.**

I will share and take turns so every camper can participate in an activity, or explore any of the natural treasures that may be found in the Fells.

I will communicate and collaborate with other campers and staff. As a group, we plan our days together, share our ideas, and actively listen to our fellow campers. Exclusionary behavior is discouraged.

I will respect all wildlife. If we find an animal, we can examine it with our eyes and show it to our friends, but any animals we find must always be treated gently, and kept in the place where we find it.

I will keep flowers in the ground. We can smell them and examine them, but we must leave them for the pollinators to find, so no picking!

I will share our outdoor spaces. The Fells is “The People’s Forest,” and our camp activities share space with hikers, bikers, explorers, and other youth groups. We are considerate of other Fells visitors and allow them to enjoy the Fells alongside us!

The Camp Director reserves the right to dismiss a camper when in their judgment the camper's behavior interferes with the rights and/or safety of others, the smooth functioning of the group or activity, or violates the camp's code of conduct. In such cases no refunds will be given.

Discipline at Fells Forest Camp

Fells Forest Camp understands that kids (and adults) make mistakes, and children will be given reminders about these rules and given opportunities to adjust their behavior.

Effective discipline is key in keeping our campers happy and safe. Fells Forest camp uses a positive, progressive form of discipline, keeping in mind the individual needs and development of a child in order to maximize their growth and to protect the group and individuals within it.

Counselors will always:

- Redirect with love and understanding
- Give campers reminders about camp rules and expectations
- Teach instead of punish
- Listen instead of yell
- Ask questions to understand the bigger picture
- Encourage campers to communicate their feelings and ideas with their counselors and group-mates

Counselors will never:

- Use corporal punishment, including spanking, this is strictly prohibited;
- Subject any camper to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse;
- Deny any camper food, water or shelter;
- Punish any child for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.

General Camp Information

Lunch and Snack

Fells Forest Camp is a NUT FREE camp. Please do not pack any food containing nuts of any kind.

Fells Forest Camp does not provide prepared meals to campers. Campers are expected to bring appropriate snacks and lunch from home each day. Campers exert a tremendous amount of energy hiking, exploring, and being outdoors in the natural environment and tend to work up a good appetite. Please pack protein packed, nutritious snacks.

Half day campers should come to camp each day with a filled water bottle (at least 32 oz) and at least one snack.

Full day campers should come to camp with a filled water bottle (at least 32 oz), a packed lunch, and enough snacks for two allotted snack times (morning and afternoon). We have ice-cooled water that campers will have access to throughout the day for refills.

Suggestions for packing food:

- Use of soft, insulated lunch bags as well as gel ice packs is strongly recommended.
- For full day campers bringing lunch to camp, a cooler will be provided to help keep lunches fresh. If possible, please refrain from packing milk and other dairy products, as we do not have the refrigeration to store them properly.

What to Wear

Generally, the weather will be warm and often humid. Please make sure your child comes to camp dressed appropriately for the outdoors and rugged trails of the Fells. Quick drying shorts and t-shirts are recommended, as well as waterproof (if possible) hiking boots, trail shoes, or sneakers **(no sandals or open toed shoes of any kind)**.

Please bring the following items each day- please clearly label all of your child's items:

- Backpack
- Snack **(no peanuts or nut-based foods and no snack-sharing)**
- All-day students: Lunch (also nut-free); a second snack is required
- Water bottle, labeled with child's name
- Rain gear when weather requires it (rain jacket, rain pants, and boots)
- Full change of clothes packed in a plastic or waterproof bag.
- Extra sunscreen and bug repellent
- Close toed shoes that are waterproof, or can get wet
- Face mask or face covering and backup mask

Your child may also bring along their favorite bug catcher, magnifying glass, binoculars, field guide, etc., but only if they are willing to share these items with the other children. Please make sure your child's name is clearly labeled on any item brought from home.

What Not to Bring to Camp:

- Cell phones
- Electronics of any kind such as apple watches (or similar), handheld games, music devices, and headphones
- Valuable items such as jewelry and expensive watches, sentimental toys like a stuffy or blanket that could get lost
- Commercial toys
- Knives (including pocket knives or leathermen)

Camp kindly asks that your child not have access to cell phones or text messaging while at camp. Fells Forest Camp's goal is to connect children with nature and this is best done without the distraction of video games, cell phones, and smart watches. If you need to relay a message to your child please call the office at 617-544-7399 and we will relay the message to them.

Outdoor Safety

Weather

Campers will spend most of their time outdoors, rain or shine. If it is raining out, please expect a wet camper at the end of the day. If the weather becomes dangerous (high winds and lightning) or it is torrentially down pouring, the Camp Director will call groups inside until the weather clears.

Sunscreen: Please be sure to send sunscreen with your child every day (minimum SPF 25). Please make sure to apply sunscreen to your child prior to arriving to camp each day. As a general policy, Camp Staff do not apply sunscreen on children, but will supervise the application of it for younger campers, if extra assistance is needed.

Hot Days & Sun

We try to keep children out of direct sunlight as much as possible.

- To keep children cool, many of our activities occur under the shade of the forest canopy.
- Campers are encouraged to wear a breathable hat (to keep them cooler, and protect their skin and eyes).
- Drinking water is important; please remember to send a large water bottle with your child every day (at least 32 Oz).

Cool Days

Please send your camper with warm clothes and a raincoat for cool, rainy days.

- During thunder or lightning all campers move to Medford High School for a safe and secure indoor location.

Bugs

Insects are a part of the great outdoors.

- **Repellent:** To make your child's camp experience more comfortable, we request that you apply an environmentally friendly insect repellent to your child, prior to arriving at camp, and pack insect repellent in your child's backpack.
- Counselors will remind campers to reapply insect repellent at lunchtime.

Ticks

In our region, ticks are everywhere.

- Every night, please take a few moments to check your child for ticks. An excellent time is at bath time or just before bed – especially check behind the knees, underwear lines, underarms, and on the back of the neck (near the hairline). A thorough daily check at home is what we recommend.
- There is no way to completely avoid ticks. Constant vigilance is the best way to combat the threat of tick-borne illness.
- If you would like more information about ticks and Lyme disease, please visit the Department of Public Health website at :
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/epidemiology/ticks/>

Poison Ivy

In the event a child comes into contact with poison Ivy, camp counselors will immediately have the child wash their hands and/or legs with soap and water to remove any of the plant's oils. If the camper has a change of clothes with them, they will be asked to change outfits in a bathroom stall to avoid further spreading the plant's oils. The child's clothing will be stored in a plastic bag so as not to contaminate any other belongings. Parents will be notified at the end of the day. If the child's medical form sights a known, strong allergic reaction to poison Ivy, the parent will be called to see if they would like to pick them up early from camp so the child may shower at home.

Child Protection Policy

- **Babysitting and Outside Contact**
 Friends of the Fells staff and volunteers shall not provide care (babysit) or instruction or develop/maintain relationships with any children or families they meet through programs. If the staff member has a pre-existing relationship, e.g., for babysitting, a Friends of the Fells camp director must be notified of the relationship and the relationship may continue. The family will be required to sign a waiver acknowledging the family's pre-existing relationship with the staff member and relieving the Friends of the Fells of any responsibility for the actions of the staff member with regard to that relationship. Friends of the Fells staff may not have contact, beyond incidental, with children they meet in Friends of the Fells programs outside of the Friends of the Fells. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Extra practices, coaching or tutoring
 - Special occasions such as graduation, family reunions, etc.
 - Visits to any residence

***Diapering Policy**

We do not allow diapering at camp. All parents are asked to pack a change of clothes for their children each day. Should a child have an accident while at camp, a counselor will bring the child to a bathroom inside the building and have the camper change in a stall. Counselors may not physically help a child change or be in the stall while they are changing. They can pass the child wet wipes under the stall door and help bag their clothes when they are finished changing.

Staff will inform the camp director or another senior staff person that there was a bathroom accident and the counselor or Camp Director will let the parents or guardians know at the time of dismissal, or call if necessary. If the child does not have a change of clothes, the camp office will call the parents for the child to be picked up, or for a change of clothes to be dropped off.

Responding to Emergencies

Our staff are thoroughly trained to respond to emergencies and staff carry written protocols with them at all times

Weather Related

As almost all of our activities occur outdoors, weather related emergencies can happen during camp.

Weather related emergencies consist of heavy winds (such as a hurricane or tornado) lightning and thunderstorms, large hail, and torrential rain.

Staff are trained to report any changes in the weather that they observe to the camp director and our camp office follows the weather on a regular basis to ensure we are up to date on any changes in outdoor conditions.

The camp director will contact all staff to return with their groups to the high school and if appropriate, camp will continue indoors with a rainy day schedule.

In the event that we have advanced notice of a tornado or hurricane we will contact parents to come and pick up their children from camp.

Fire

In the unlikely event that a fire occurs in the building while campers and staff are inside, staff are trained to safely evacuate the building with their groups.

Groups are assigned designated meeting spots outside the building, staff will promptly take attendance and report it to the Camp Director.

We will follow evacuation directions provided by emergency personnel and communicate procedures for reuniting with your child.

Health Care

- Our Healthcare Consultant is David Osler, a Licensed Pediatrician. Every staff member is CPR/First Aid certified and Epi-pen trained. Emergency care is provided by the Medford Fire department/EMS
- We have two On-site Healthcare Supervisors who are trained by Our Healthcare Consultant to handle emergencies such as asthmatic and diabetic related incidents.

Camper Health Information

- **All Medical documents are due on May 1st.**
- We require a copy of your child's immunization record (dates must be provided by a healthcare provider) and written proof of a physical exam conducted within 18 months of the camp session. Please email us if you need a health care treatment/immunization form for your physician to complete.

Sick Campers/Lice

- Campers who are ill or who have infections are not allowed to attend camp until they are healthy and infection free.
- A child with a non-Covid-19 related illness, must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to camp.
- Please email the Camp Director if your child is sick and will not attend camp.
- PLEASE keep your child home if they're not feeling well, are overtired, have a fever, or a rash.
- Kids often do not want to be at camp if they have stomach aches, headaches, or didn't have a good night's rest. We also do not want to infect other children should your child be coming down with an illness.
- If your child gets lice, notify the camp office immediately. We are then required to do lice checks on that entire camp group. The camper must be lice-free before returning.

What if My Child Becomes Sick or Injured at Camp?

- All campers requiring medical assessment and/or treatment beyond basic first aid are referred to the Health Care office. Based on the assessment, the camper will be cared for on-site and returned to their group, sent home for parental or personal health care provider care, or referred to emergency care providers.

- If your child's illness extends beyond 20-30 minutes we will notify you by phone. Sick children stay with the Health Care Supervisor in a quiet area so they can rest and be monitored.
- If your child has an injury needing immediate care we will call 911, and then call you immediately thereafter.
- Parents or guardians will be notified of any serious accident or illness as soon as possible; For more minor incidents (cuts, scraps, bug bites, etc), a staff person will inform you at the time of pickup.

At-Camp Medications

If your child requires medication while at camp you must comply with the following standards:

- All medications must be in their original containers bearing the pharmacy label and camper name, and have specific instructions for use.
- Medications must be current (not expired).
- All medications must be approved by the camp's consulting physician, and be seen and checked by the Health care team.
- When no longer needed, medications shall be returned to a parent or guardian whenever possible. If the medication cannot be returned, it shall be disposed of properly.

Emergency Contacts

In the case of an emergency, Primary and Secondary Contacts will be called first and alternate emergency contacts will be called only if the Primary and Secondary Contacts cannot be reached, or if a camper needs to be taken home.

Asthma and/or Severe Allergies

All campers who have severe allergies must provide an Emergency Action Plan.

- This plan should be written by the prescribing physician and describe the triggers of the severe reaction, the signs of the reaction and the necessary steps that must be taken if such a reaction should occur (e.g. give 2 tsp. Benadryl then administer epi-pen, etc.)
- If there are questions regarding an Emergency Action Plan, the camp nurse will contact a parent/guardian to go over this plan before camp begins.
- As a general policy, camp will hold onto camper medications for the entirety of the session and return it to you at the end of the week. All medications will be safely stored in a lock box overnight.
- All Health Care Staff are trained on the administration of epi-pens and inhalers. All staff are trained on the symptoms of anaphylaxis and allergic response. Campers may also self-administer epi-pens with written permission from the parent/guardian.
- Inhalers can be administered by a member of the healthcare team, or by the camper him/herself with written permission from the parent/guardian. **You should indicate your preference on the registration form.**

Insulin

- If a diabetic child requires their blood sugar to be monitored, or requires insulin injections, and the parent or guardian and the camp health care consultant give written approval, the camper, who is capable, may be allowed to self-monitor and/or self-inject themselves.
- Blood monitoring activities such as insulin pump calibration, etc. and self-injection will take place in the presence of the properly trained health care supervisor who may support the child's process of self-administration.
- The camp's health care consultant will train our health care supervisors on the signs and symptoms of hypo or hyperglycemia, and appropriate diabetic plan management.

Camper Immunization Requirements of the CDC

Immunization Charts

- (1) Healthcare provider must provide documentation of the immunizations.
- (2) Serologic proof of immunity is acceptable in lieu of immunization.
- (3) Exemption due to religious reasons is allowed, but the guardian must provide written notice. **If 10 years since previous dose*

Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees: Commonly Asked Questions

This information is provided at the request of the Department of Public Health and the Medford Board of Health.

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by infection with bacteria called *Neisseria meningitis*. 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. Symptoms of meningococcal disease can include fever, severe and constant headache, stiff neck or neck pain, nausea and vomiting, and rash. In the US, about 350-550 people get meningococcal disease each year and 10-15% die despite receiving antibiotic treatment. Of those who survive, about 10-20% may lose limbs, become hard of hearing or deaf, have problems with their nervous system, including long term neurologic problems, 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 most at risk for getting meningococcal disease?

People who travel to certain parts of the world where the disease is very common, microbiologists, people with HIV infection and those exposed to meningococcal disease during an outbreak are at risk for meningococcal disease. Children and adults with damaged or removed spleens or persistent complement component deficiency (an

inherited immune disorder) are at risk. Adolescents, and people who live in certain settings such as college freshmen living in dormitories and military recruits are at greater risk of disease from some of the serotypes.

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?

Yes, there are 2 different meningococcal vaccines. Quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menactra and Menveo) protects against 4 serotypes (A, C, W and Y) of meningococcal disease. Meningococcal serogroup B vaccine (Bexsero and Trumenba) protects against serogroup B meningococcal disease, for ages 10 and older.

Should my child or adolescent receive the meningococcal vaccine?

That depends. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menactra and Menveo) is routinely recommended at age 11-12 years with a booster at age 16. In addition, this vaccine may be recommended for children with certain high-risk health conditions, such as those described above. Otherwise, meningococcal vaccine is not recommended for attendance at camps.

Meningococcal serogroup B vaccine (Bexsero and Trumenba) is recommended for people with certain relatively rare high-risk health conditions (examples: persons with a damaged spleen or whose spleen has been removed, those with persistent complement component deficiency (an inherited disorder), and people who may have been exposed during an outbreak). Adolescents and young adults (16 through 23 years of age) who do not have high risk conditions may 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. Parents of adolescents and 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 or adolescent 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.
4. contact their healthcare provider immediately if they have symptoms of meningitis.

If your child is exposed to someone with meningococcal disease, antibiotics may be recommended to keep your child from getting sick.

You can obtain more information about meningococcal disease or vaccination from your healthcare provider, your local Board of Health (listed in the phone book under government), or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800 or on the MDPH website at [Mass Dept of Health](#).

Provided by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in accordance with M.G.L. c.111, s.219 and 105 CMR 430.157(C). Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Division of Epidemiology and Immunization, 305 South Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 2018

Please follow these links for information on the following topic:

Click to download Mass.gov's Information *About Recreational Camps in Massachusetts* [Recreational-camps-faqs-parents.docx](#)

[Concussions and how to identify them](#)

Maintenance of Records

Fells Forest Camp maintains all records relating to campers and staff for a minimum of three years.

As a parent, you have the right to review Background Check, Healthcare, Discipline Policies, and grievance procedures, upon request.