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## GET VACCINATED TODAY!

The Illinois Department of Public Health is issuing this public service announcement regarding the bacterial meningitis cases identified in the Chicago area to ensure individuals are able to take appropriate precautions. Nine cases of bacterial meningitis, including one death, have been reported among Chicago-area gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) since May 2015. The most recent two cases were reported in February and March of this year. Eight of these men had other health conditions comprising their immune system.

**A safe and effective vaccine can prevent bacterial meningitis.** We recommend that all gay and bisexual sexually active men who have recently visited, or who plan to visit the Chicago area in the future, be vaccinated with two doses of vaccine, at least eight weeks apart. This is particularly important for individuals who may have any health condition that could compromise their immunity. **If you were vaccinated more than five years ago, you should be vaccinated again.**

Vaccines are available at most doctor offices and pharmacies, as well as Chicago Department of Public Health Clinics and partner sites. For more information on vaccination sites, call 311 or visit [www.cityofchicago.org/health](http://www.cityofchicago.org/health).

Signs and symptoms of bacterial meningitis include fever, headache and stiff neck. Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, increases sensitivity to light and confusion. **If you are experiencing these symptoms, please seek medical attention, immediately.**

**Bacterial meningitis is spread through lung and throat secretions,** which can be spread through activities such as sharing drinks, cigarettes, or *any* smoking devices, kissing and sexual contact. To help protect yourself, we also recommend washing your hands frequently.

We encourage you to spread the word about the importance of getting vaccinated with your friends, peers and sexual partners.

If you have questions, please contact your health care provider or call the Illinois HIV/STD Hotline at (800)243-2437.