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MENINGITIS VACCINATION: A STUDENT'S BEST PROTECTION AGAINST A DANGEROUS INFECTION

Meningitis is a contagious, potentially fatal infection of the membranes that surround the brain and the spinal cord.¹ If not treated in time, it can lead to permanent complications, such as brain damage or hearing loss,² and can even lead to death.

A growing threat on campus

The risk of a meningitis outbreak can be greater on college campuses than in the general population.³ And in the past five years, the incidence of meningitis outbreaks has risen sharply on college campuses.^{1,3} As a result, the American College Health Association (ACHA) has issued a recommendation that college students consider vaccination with the meningococcal vaccine for effective protection against potentially fatal meningococcal disease. In addition, ACHA also recommends that college health services provide information about the vaccine to students and parents as well as access to the vaccine for those students who choose to be vaccinated.

A simple way to reduce your risk for a serious disease

Vaccination is an easy and effective way for students to protect themselves against possible infection. Meningitis outbreaks can develop very quickly, and cases tend to happen close together in time.^{1,3} So getting vaccinated now can reduce your risk for disease if an outbreak does occur. For these reasons, you should make sure the college student in your family seeks a meningitis vaccination this year.

For more information, or to make an appointment for your student, please call the campus health center today.

Phone number

Health Service 581-ASAP (2727)

Immunization with meningitis vaccine should be deferred during any acute illness. Meningitis vaccine should not be administered to pregnant women or individuals sensitive to thimerosal or any other components of the vaccine. Adverse reactions may include redness and swelling at the injection site. As with any vaccine, vaccination with meningitis vaccine may not protect 100% of all susceptible individuals.

References: 1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Control and prevention of meningococcal disease and control and prevention of serogroup C meningococcal disease: evaluation and management of suspected outbreaks. *MMWR*. 1997;46(RR-5):1-21. 2. Scheld WM. Bacterial meningitis and brain abscess. In: Isselbacher KJ, Braunwald E, Wilson JD, Martin JB, Fauci AS, Kasper DL, eds. *Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine*. 13th edition. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Inc.; 1994;2:2296-2309. 3. Data on file, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997.