

Off to College?



Quick Facts

Meningococcal disease is a serious illness. It can cause blood infections and meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord). It can lead to brain damage, disability, and death.

Meningococcal disease is a concern on college campuses, especially for students living in dorms. In WA, fewer than 30 cases occur each year. Of those, 6-20 cases are caused by serogroup C, W, or Y, and about 3-13 cases are caused by serogroup B.

Meningococcal disease needs close contact to spread. It is spread by coughing, kissing, or sharing anything by mouth with an infected person, such as eating utensils, lip balm, or toothbrushes.

Call your doctor right away if you have signs of meningococcal disease or if you have been close to someone who may have it. Common signs are stiff neck, headache, fever, sensitivity to light, sleepiness, confusion, and seizures.

Vaccination is your best shot at preventing meningococcal disease.

There are two types of vaccines that protect against several kinds of meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal A, C, W, Y vaccine (MCV4) is a vaccine for all children aged 11 to 12 years with a booster for teens aged 16 to 18 years. Serogroups A, C, W, and Y cause most meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal B vaccine (MenB) protects against serogroup B, and should be given to teens and adults aged 16 to 23 who have rare health problems or are at risk because of a meningococcal B disease outbreak. If you are healthy, talk with your doctor to see if you should get this vaccine.

Ask your doctor which meningococcal vaccines you need if you:

- Are a college student living in a dorm.
- Plan to travel to countries where meningococcal disease is common.
- Have a weakened immune system.

www.doh.wa.gov/Immunization

It starts with you... Get vaccinated!

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

Washington State Department of
Health

DOH 348-086 April 2020