

# OFF TO COLLEGE?



## What you should know about meningococcal disease:

- Meningococcal (me-nin-je-kok-ul) disease is a serious illness caused by bacteria that can infect the blood or areas around the brain and spinal cord. Infection can lead to brain damage, disability, and rapid death.
- Meningitis is the most common form of meningococcal disease. Common **symptoms of meningitis** include stiff neck, headache, and high fever.
- Meningococcal vaccines can help prevent meningococcal disease.
- Check with your health care provider about which meningococcal vaccines you need.

**College freshman in dorms are at higher risk of catching meningococcal disease.**

### Before you start college,

make sure you are up-to-date on all your shots.

#### College Immunization Checklist:

- MMR** (measles, mumps, rubella) – 2 doses
- Tdap** (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis)
- Varicella** (chickenpox) – 2 doses
- Hepatitis B** – 3 doses
- HPV** (human papillomavirus) – 3 doses
- Meningococcal**  
Check with your health care provider

Some of these are recommended and others are required for enrollment. Check with your school.

#### I have reviewed this information and...

- I received meningococcal vaccines on

#### Men ACWY (MCV4) Vaccine:

Date: / /

Date: / /

#### Men B Vaccine:

Date: / /

Date: / /

Date: / /

- I intend to receive meningococcal vaccine(s).
- I do not intend to receive meningococcal vaccine(s).

Printed Name

Birthdate / /

Signature

Date: / /

Return signed form to:



## How Many People Get the Disease? Who Is Likely To Get It?

Meningococcal disease is rare but serious. About 1,000 people in the U.S. get meningococcal disease each year. After infancy, older adolescents and young adults have the highest rate of meningococcal disease. College freshmen living in dorms are particularly at risk.

## How Serious Is It?

About one in ten people who get meningococcal disease will die from it even if treated. Up to one in five survivors will lose a limb, become deaf, suffer brain damage, or have other complications.

## How Are Meningococcal Bacteria Spread?

The bacteria are spread from person to person through air droplets. Close contact such as kissing, coughing, smoking, and living in crowded conditions (like dorms) can increase your risk of getting the disease.

Overall, 5–10% of the U.S. population has the meningococcal bacteria in their throat, but only a few of them get sick. No one knows why some people get sick and others don't.

## How Can I Protect Myself?

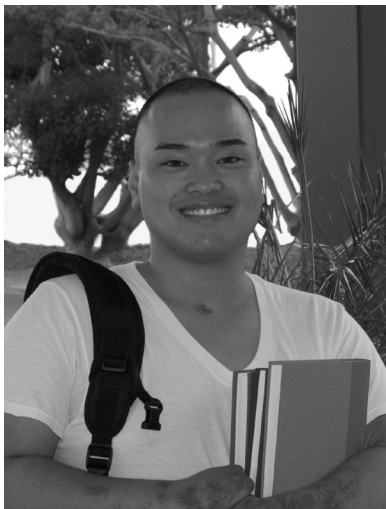
You can protect yourself by:

- not sharing items that have touched someone else's mouth, such as cups, bottles, cigarettes, lip balm, and eating utensils;
- not smoking; and
- getting vaccinated against meningococcal disease.

Check with your health care provider about which meningococcal vaccines you need.

## What Meningococcal Vaccines Should I Get?

- MCV4 vaccine protects against four deadly types of meningitis. If you have not received a dose since your 16th birthday, make sure to get it now.
- MenB vaccine protects against the most common cause of bacterial meningitis among teens and young adults. In recent years, Men B outbreaks have occurred at UC Santa Barbara, the University of Oregon, and Princeton University. Ask your doctor if you should get it.



**“It could happen to anyone. Get immunized.”**

—Jonathan Deguzman (*meningococcal disease survivor*)

### For more information:

California Department of Public Health,

Immunization Branch: ([shotsforschool.org](http://shotsforschool.org))

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: ([cdc.gov/vaccines](http://cdc.gov/vaccines))

American College Health Association: ([acha.org](http://acha.org))

### Ask your healthcare provider or student health service!

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