



Health Services

University of Oklahoma Student Affairs

Hours: 8 a.m.–6 p.m.
Telephone: 405 325-4611, Fax: 405 325-7065
Web: <http://goddard.ou.edu/healthed>

We pledge to treat you with dignity and respect and to provide you with competent and compassionate therapeutic services.

Charles B. Goddard Health Center
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(Corner of Brooks Street and Elm Avenue)

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How Effective is the Vaccine?

- It is 85-100% effective in preventing the disease among serogroups A, C, Y, and W-135 in older children and adults
- Immunity lasts approximately 3-5 years

Where can One Get the Vaccine?

The meningitis vaccine is available at OU Health Services. For more information regarding the vaccine please call (405) 325-4611, ext. 41112.

Reference

www.cdc.gov (Centers for Disease Control)

MENINGITIS

Meeting the health needs of OU students, faculty, staff, and dependents

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What is Meningitis?

Meningitis is a rare but potentially fatal bacterial or viral infection. It can result in permanent brain damage, learning disabilities, loss of limbs, loss of hearing, organ failure, and death. Meningitis is an inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord.

Meningococcal meningitis strikes about 3,000 Americans each year and is responsible for approximately 300 deaths annually. It is estimated that 100-125 cases of meningococcal meningitis occur on college campuses and 5-15 students die each year as a result.

What is the Cause of Meningococcal Meningitis?

Meningococcal meningitis is caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis*. This bacterium is the leading cause of meningitis and septicemia (blood poisoning) among teenagers and young adults in the United States.

Why are College Students at Risk?

Studies show that individuals between the ages of 15-24 are at a greater risk of contracting meningococcal meningitis. Data suggests that certain social behaviors common among college students such as smoking, partying, excessive alcohol consumption, and irregular sleep patterns may increase a student's risk for contracting the disease. The Centers for Disease Control reports that students living in dormitories have six times the risk of contracting meningococcal meningitis than college students overall. Outbreaks of meningitis have risen sharply in the past 10 years.

How is Meningococcal Meningitis Spread?

Meningococcal meningitis is transmitted through the air via droplets of respiratory secretions or through direct contact with an infected person. Direct contact is defined as oral contact with shared items such as cigarettes or drinking glasses or through intimate contact such as kissing. Many people are carriers of the organism and are immune to infection; however they can spread meningococcal meningitis to others.

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What are the Common Symptoms?

Early symptoms resemble the flu and may include:

- High Fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Rash
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Lethargy

Meningococcal meningitis is often mistaken as something that is less serious. If it is not detected early, often within hours of the first symptom(s), the disease can progress. Students are urged to seek medical care immediately if they experience two or more of the above symptoms concurrently.

When do Outbreaks Occur?

Meningococcal meningitis usually peaks during late winter and early spring.

How can Meningitis be Prevented?

A vaccine is available for the four types of bacteria that cause meningococcal meningitis. These four types are serogroups A, C, Y and W-135 and account for two-thirds of meningococcal meningitis cases among the college population. The development of immunity post-vaccination usually requires 7-10 days. It is recommended that the following people obtain the vaccination:

- Entering college students who want to decrease their risk for the disease
- Highest priority should be for students 18-24 years of age; students 25 years or older have a much lower risk of contracting the disease
- Students with medical conditions that compromise immunity (e.g., HIV, absent spleen, antibody deficiency)
- Students traveling to areas of the world with endemic meningococcal meningitis.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends that college students become educated about meningococcal meningitis and the benefits of the vaccination. It is also recommended that colleges and universities provide access to the vaccine for those who wish to be vaccinated.