



Meningococcal Disease Information

First year college students residing in residence halls are at increased risk for meningococcal disease, a bacterial infection commonly referred to as *Meningitis*. Meningococcal meningitis is rare, but can be fatal or leave survivors with severe and permanent disabilities, including hearing loss, brain damage, and limb amputation. First year college students living in residence halls have been found to have up to a six-fold increased risk for the disease.

Meningococcal meningitis is caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis*. This bacterium has many different subtypes or serogroups. Five of these serogroups, A, B, C, Y and W-135, cause almost all the invasive disease seen. Serogroup B has been responsible for the most recent outbreaks on college campuses throughout the United States.

There are 2 types of meningococcal vaccines available in the United States – one type protects against **serogroups A, C, Y and W-135** and the other type protects against **serogroup B**. *There is no single vaccine that protects against all 5 serogroups.*

- Meningococcal Conjugated Vaccines for serogroups A, C, Y and W-135 are currently marketed under the name *Menactra* and *Menveo*.
- Meningococcal serogroup B vaccines are marketed under the names *Bexsero* and *Trumenba*.

The CDC recommends vaccination against serogroups A, C, Y and W-135 for students younger than 22 years of age who will reside in residence halls. Students who received their serogroup A, C, Y and W-135 vaccination before the age of 16 require a 2nd vaccination (booster) after their 16th birthday.

The CDC also recommends that college students consider vaccination against Meningococcal serogroup B. The Meningococcal serogroup B series can be administered to persons 16 through 23 years of age with a preferred age of vaccination of 16 through 18 years.

In 2002, Pennsylvania enacted the College and University Student Vaccination Act that requires all students who will reside in campus housing is educated about Meningitis and the benefits of vaccination. ***ALL new Lehigh students who will reside in campus housing must provide documentation of vaccination against meningococcal Meningitis or sign waivers declining the vaccines.*** The Lehigh University Health & Wellness Center is fully committed to upholding this statute. Students who are not in compliance with the Pennsylvania College and University Student Vaccination Act will NOT receive their room keys on Move-In Day.

With the arrival of a new vaccine against the B serogroup in 2014, *almost all cases of Meningococcal meningitis are now vaccine preventable.* Adverse reactions to both MCV4 and MenB vaccines are mild and infrequent. As with all vaccines, vaccination against Meningococcal meningitis may not protect 100% of susceptible individuals. The Lehigh University Health & Wellness Center carries the MCV4 and both MenB vaccines and is able to provide those vaccines to students beginning any time prior to arrival on campus.