

Meningococcal Information

College students are at increased risk for meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as *Meningitis*. In fact, first year students living in residence halls have a six-fold increased risk for the disease. The American College Health Association (ACHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommend that college students, particularly first year students living in residence halls, learn more about *Meningitis* and vaccination. With the arrival of a new vaccine against the B serogroup of this infection, almost all cases of *Meningitis* are vaccine preventable. Two of our first year students were stricken with this B serogroup in November 2011; serogroup B has also been responsible for recent outbreaks on college campuses. Although not all physicians' offices may be offering this new vaccine, we will be offering it on our campus.

Pennsylvania's College and University Student Vaccination Act requires all students who will be residing in campus housing to provide documentation that they have received the *Meningitis* vaccine or sign a waiver declining vaccination. The Lehigh University Health and Wellness Center and Residential Services are committed to upholding this statute; students not in compliance will NOT receive room keys on Move-In Day.

What is meningococcal meningitis? Bacterial meningitis is rare, but can be deadly or cause severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, and limb amputation.

How is it spread? Meningococcal meningitis is spread by direct contact with infected individuals (for example, sharing food, drinks or cigarettes and kissing) or prolonged close contact with respiratory secretions (for example, sleeping in the same room).

What are the symptoms? Symptoms of meningococcal meningitis often resemble the flu and can include high fever, headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea, vomiting, lethargy and confusion.

Who is at risk? Certain college students, particularly first year students who live in residence halls, have been found to have an increased risk for meningococcal meningitis.

What should I know about the vaccines? The original (MCV-4, *Menectra* or *Menveo*) vaccine protects against four of the five most common strains (A, C, W, and Y) of the disease and lasts approximately up to five years. The newer meningococcal B vaccine protects against the B serogroup.

The CDC recommends vaccination with MCV-4 up through age 21 years for those living in residence halls. Students who received their first shot of the original MCV-4 vaccine before their 16th birthday require a 2nd (booster) shot. Although CDC has not as of yet recommended serogroup B vaccination for college students, Lehigh University is recommending and offering it based on our experience with the illness on our campus and the expectation that CDC will soon recommend it for college students at their June 2015 meeting.

Adverse reactions to the MCV-4 and serogroup B vaccines are mild and infrequent, consisting primarily of redness and pain at the injection site and rarely a fever. As with any vaccine, vaccination against Meningitis may not protect 100 percent of all susceptible individuals. These vaccines do not protect against viral meningitis.

The Lehigh University Health and Wellness Center is able to provide both meningococcal vaccines, MCV-4 and MenB. Both vaccines may be given at the same time. The fee for each dose of vaccine is:

MCV-4	\$110.00	
Men-B:		
either - <i>Bexsero</i>	\$165.00	(2 dose series)
or		
<i>Trumenba</i>	\$125.00	(3 dose series)