

Meningococcal Disease

Meningococcal disease is a serious illness caused by bacteria that can infect the blood or the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord. It can lead to brain damage, disability or even death. Meningococcal infection is fairly uncommon with only 300 to 400 cases occurring in California each year, with 100 of these cases being college students. Risk factors are increased for students living in dormitories.

Symptoms of meningitis

High fever, headache, and stiff neck are common symptoms of meningitis. Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, sleepiness, confusion, and in severe cases, convulsions. Symptoms may progress rapidly, so early diagnosis is important.

Is meningitis contagious?

Although not as contagious as the common cold, bacterial meningitis can be spread by the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions (coughing, kissing), or by prolonged exposure to an infected person. Practicing good hand washing habits and avoiding sharing materials that come in contact with people's mouths reduces your risk of infection.

Can meningitis be treated?

Bacterial meningitis can be treated with a number of effective antibiotics. It is important that treatment be started early in the course of the disease to reduce morbidity and mortality.

Can the vaccine prevent meningitis?

There are two vaccines approved for use in the U.S. for prevention of meningococcal meningitis. Both vaccines can offer protection from 4 out of 5 subtypes of the meningococcal bacteria that cause severe illness. The Center for Disease Control **does** recommend vaccination for college students living in dormitories. The risk to college students not living in dormitories is equal to that of the general population of the same age. Inform your health care provider if you have ever been diagnosed with Guillian-Barre Syndrome as there are some questions regarding use of the vaccine with this population.

Where can I obtain this vaccine?

Eastside Neighborhood Clinic

915 N. Milpas, S.B., phone # 962-6616

Westside Neighborhood Clinic

628 W. Micheltorena, S.B. phone# 963-1546

Isla Vista Clinic

970 Embarcadero del Mar, Isla Vista

phone # 968-7041

Franklin Clinic

1136 E. Montecito St.S.B. phone # 568-2099

Med Center

2954 State St., S.B., (vaccine available at this Med Center only)

Phone #682-7411

Students should call the clinic of their choice to make an appointment and for information regarding costs.

**Santa Barbara City College
Student Health Services
721 Cliff Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
SS-170 ♦ 956-0581 ext. 2298
www.sbccc.edu/healthservices**