



Integrated Physician Solutions, Inc.



***Vax Facts:* MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE**

- Meningococcal disease (meningitis) is a serious bacterial infection that occurs in cycles, striking between 1800 and 3400 people in the United States (US) each year¹; up to 1 in 5 of those infected will die²⁻⁵
- Every year, an estimated 100-125 cases occur on college campuses, resulting in death for 5-15 college students⁶
- College freshmen are at increased risk of getting meningococcal disease.^{3,7} Freshmen living in dormitories have at least a 6-fold higher risk for meningococcal disease than all US undergraduates combined^{3,7}
- Meningococcal disease can be spread by sneezing or coughing, sharing cigarettes or drinking glasses, and intimate contact such as kissing⁶
- Meningococcal disease can trigger devastating, lasting complications, including permanent brain damage, hearing loss, learning disability, loss of limbs, and kidney failure⁶
- Vaccination can reduce the risk of getting meningococcal disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health organizations recommend that vaccination be considered for incoming college freshmen^{3,6,8}





Talk to Your Teen About MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

When your teenager reaches the age of 15-17 or gets ready to graduate from high school, it's a good opportunity to talk about the risk of meningococcal disease. Here are the 3 most important points to discuss:

1. Meningococcal disease develops quickly.⁶

Warn your teen not to ignore symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, neck stiffness, lethargy, nausea or vomiting, and rash. Although meningococcal disease may initially feel like influenza (flu), it can strike very suddenly and quickly progress to a life-threatening illness.

2. Meningococcal disease is contagious.⁶

Coughing or sneezing, sharing a drinking glass, and kissing are some of the ways the disease spreads. While you can't expect your teen to live in isolation, advise him or her to be aware of everyday interactions.

3. Vaccination is the best way to prevent meningococcal infection and should be considered particularly for young people preparing for college, especially those who plan to live in dormitories.³ Talk to your teen about visiting your family's health-care provider for meningococcal immunization, particularly if he or she is about to leave home for college.

References: 1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Summary of notifiable diseases—United States, 2002. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2004;51:1-84. 2. Rosenstein NE, Perkins BA, Stephens DS, et al. The changing epidemiology of meningococcal disease in the United States, 1992-1996. *J Infect Dis.* 1999;180:1894-1901. 3. CDC. Prevention and control of meningococcal disease and meningococcal disease and college students: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2000;49(RR-7):1-20. 4. Harrison LH, Pass MA, Mendelsohn AB, et al. Invasive meningococcal disease in adolescents and young adults. *JAMA.* 2001;286:694-699. 5. Erickson L, De Wals P. Complications and sequelae of meningococcal disease in Quebec, Canada, 1990-1994. *Clin Infect Dis.* 1998;26:1159-1164. 6. American College Health Association. Meningitis on campus. Communications support. Available at: http://www.acha.org/projects_programs/meningitis/disease_info.cfm#transmission. Accessed June 25, 2004. 7. Bruce MG, Rosenstein NE, Capparella JM, Shutt KA, Perkins BA, Collins M. Risk factors for meningococcal disease in college students. *JAMA.* 2001;286:688-693. 8. American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Infectious Diseases. Meningococcal disease prevention and control strategies for practice-based physicians (addendum: recommendations for college students). *Pediatrics.* 2000;106:1500-1504.