



SUNY Sullivan  
Health Service Office  
(845) 434-5750 ext. 4247  
Fax: (845) 434- 3628  
Healthservices@sunysullivan.edu

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## MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS FACT SHEET

**WHAT IS MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS?** Meningococcal disease is CAUSED BY BACTERIA CALLED *Neisseria meningitidis*. It can lead to serious blood infections. When the linings of the brain and spinal cord become infected, it is called meningitis. The disease strikes quickly and can have serious complications, including death.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease. Some people are at higher risk. This disease occurs more often in people who are: Living in crowded settings, such as college dormitories or military barracks, Teenagers/Young adults, Infants younger than one year of age, Traveling to areas outside of the US, such as the 'meningitis belt' in Africa, Living with a damaged spleen / have no spleen or have sickle cell disease, being treated with the medication Soliris® or who have an inherited immune disorder, or Exposed during an outbreak.

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?** Symptoms appear suddenly – usually 3 to 4 days after a person is infected. It can take up to 10 days to develop symptoms.

Symptoms may include: A sudden high fever, Headache, Stiff neck (meningitis), Nausea and vomiting, red-purple skin rash, weakness and feeling very ill, Eyes sensitive to light.

**HOW IS THE MENINGOCOCCUS DISEASE SPREAD?** It spreads from person to person by coughing or coming into close or lengthy contact with someone who is sick or who carries the bacteria. Contact includes kissing, sharing drinks, or living together. Up to one in 10 people carry the meningococcal bacteria in their nose or throat without getting sick.

**IS THERE TREATMENT?** Early diagnosis of meningococcal disease is very important! If it is caught early, meningococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics. But, sometimes the infection has caused too much damage for antibiotics to prevent death or serious long-term problems. Most people need to be cared for in a hospital due to serious, life-threatening infections.

**WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE?** **The single best way to prevent this disease is to be vaccinated.** Vaccines are available for people 6 weeks of age and older. Various vaccines offer protection against the five major strains of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease.

- ALL teenagers should receive two doses of vaccine against strains A, C, W, and Y, also known as MenACWY or MCV4 (Menactra) vaccine. The 1<sup>st</sup> dose is given at 11 – 12 years of age, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose (booster) at 16 years. \* It is very important that teens receive the booster dose at 16yrs in order to protect them when they are at the greatest risk of the meningococcal disease.
- Teens and young adults can also be vaccinated against the "B" strain, also known as MenB vaccine.

**WHO SHOULD NOT BE VACCINATED?** If you have severe allergies, or if you have had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of the meningococcal vaccine. Anyone who has a severe allergy to any component in the vaccine. Anyone who is moderately or severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled should wait until they are better.

### **WHAT ARE THE MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINE REQUIREMENTS FOR COLLEGE ATTENDANCE ?**

New York State Public Health Law #2167 requires that all college and university students enrolled for at least six (6) semester hours or the equivalent per semester, must receive this fact sheet along with the attached Meningitis Response form. **The Meningitis Response Form is required to be completed and turned in along with their immunization records.**

The meningococcal vaccine is not a required vaccine for SUNY Sullivan, however, it is recommended.

**Please Flip, Important information on Both Sides**