



American  
Jewish  
University

Dear Student,

As the nurses of the Student Health Center at American Jewish University, we are writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis, and the recommendation from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that college students, particularly freshmen living in dormitories and residence halls, be educated about meningitis and the benefits of vaccination. The panel based its recommendation on recent studies showing that college students, particularly freshmen living in dormitories, have a six-fold increased risk for meningitis. The recommendation further states that information about the disease and vaccination is appropriate for other undergraduate students who also wish to reduce their risk for the disease.

In support of the recommendation, recent California law now mandates that colleges and universities inform incoming students about meningitis and the available vaccine. The vaccine is available at the Student Health Center.

Residents on campus are required by the state to receive the Meningococcal vaccine or sign a waiver.

For more information, please feel free to contact the AJU Student Health Center at

310-476-9777, ext. 219 and/or consult with your physician.

Sincerely,

Patti Graham, RN and Gabriella Juarez, RN

Student Health Coordinators



## MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINE INFORMATION & WAIVER

### What you should know about meningococcal disease:

- Meningococcal (me-nin-je-kok-ul) disease is a serious illness caused by bacteria that can infect the blood or areas around the brain and spinal cord. Infection can lead to brain damage, disability, and rapid death.
- Meningitis is the most common form of meningococcal disease. Common symptoms of meningitis include stiff neck, headache, and high fever.
- The meningococcal conjugate vaccine is your best shot at preventing several types of meningococcal disease and it is especially important for college freshmen living in dorms.
- A booster dose of the vaccine is now recommended at age 16 or older. Even if you got it before age 16, you need an additional dose before entering college.

### How are meningococcal bacteria spread?

The bacteria are spread from person to person through air droplets. Close contact such as kissing, coughing, smoking, and living in crowded conditions (like dorms) can increase your risk of getting the disease.

Overall, 5–10% of the U.S. population has the meningococcal bacteria in their throat, but only a few of them get sick. No one knows why some people get sick and others don't.

### How can I protect myself?

You can protect yourself by:

- not sharing items that have touched someone else's mouth, such as cups, bottles, cigarettes, lip balm, and eating utensils;
- not smoking;
- getting the meningococcal conjugate vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends one dose at age 11 or 12 and a booster dose at age 16. If you missed your shot after turning 16, get it now.

### How many people get the disease? Who is likely to get it?

Meningococcal disease is a rare but serious disease. An estimated 1,000 people get meningococcal disease each year in the U.S., with 130 to 200 of them in California. After infancy, older adolescents and Young adults have the highest rate of meningococcal disease.

**College freshmen living in dorms are particularly at risk.**

### How serious is it?

Even if treated, 10–12% of people who get meningococcal disease will die from it. Of the survivors, 11-19% lose their arms or legs, become deaf or brain damaged, or suffer other complications.

### How effective are the vaccines?

Meningococcal vaccines are at least 85% effective at preventing 4 of the 5 most common forms of meningococcal disease.

Ask your health care provider about the benefits and risks of meningococcal vaccines.

### For more information:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)
- American College Health Association [www.acha.org](http://www.acha.org)
- **Ask your healthcare provider**
- **AJU Student Health Center**  
**310-476-9777 x219**

### I have reviewed this information and...

- I received** the meningococcal vaccine on  / /
- I intend** to receive meningococcal vaccine.
- I do not intend** to receive the meningococcal vaccine.

Printed Name

Birthdate / /

Signature

Today's Date / /

**Return this completed form to your corresponding home campus.**

PLEASE MAKE A PERSONAL COPY OF ALL RECORDS BEFORE SUBMITTING.