

MENINGITIS B FAQs

What is Meningitis?

Meningococcal disease, commonly referred to as Meningitis, is a rare but sometimes deadly bacterial infection. The disease strikes quickly and has devastating complications, including hearing loss, brain damage, kidney damage or limb amputations. There are five types, called Serogroups of this bacteria, A,C,Y,W and B. Most students have been immunized against the first four types, but no vaccine was available to protect against Meningitis B until late 2014.

How is MenB transmitted?

- MenB is transmitted through exposure to the saliva of an infected individual through behavior such as sharing drinking glasses, makeup, utensils, or smoking devices and by intimate contact such as kissing.
- It can be shared through prolonged, close contact with someone who is infected, such as spending several hours together in a car or dorm room together.
- Meningococcal bacteria **cannot** live outside the body for very long
- Most people infected with MenB do not become ill but they can still infect others. These people are called asymptomatic carriers. There may be hundreds of these healthy carriers on campus. People can carry the bacteria in their throat for several weeks and eventually eliminate it through their immune system. Even though these people are not ill, they are the main source for spreading the infection to others. There is no way to know if you are a healthy carrier. Neither vaccines nor antibiotics eliminate the carrier state.

Being immunized is the best way to prevent yourself from getting Meningococcal B disease.

What are the symptoms of meningococcal disease?

- The disease is often misdiagnosed because the early symptoms of meningococcal disease closely resemble the flu.
- Symptoms may include sudden high fever, headache, nausea, vomiting and exhaustion.
- Particularly worrisome symptoms include sensitivity to lights, a stiff neck & a purplish rash.
- The symptoms progress quickly and it is very important to seek immediate medical attention.

How can I avoid getting MenB?

To avoid being infected:

- Avoid [sharing secretions with others](#). Drinks, eating utensils, lip gloss, kissing, cigarettes, etc. **DON'T SWAP SPIT!**
- Get fully immunized with two doses of the Meningitis B Vaccine of your choice. The Meningitis B vaccine is recommended for ages 10 to 25. Contact your family doctor or come to the Immunization clinic being held on campus 2/20/18 & 2/22/18.

If I get sick, how do I know if I have Meningococcal B disease?

- Individuals with Meningitis B disease typically develop a high fever, severe headache, stiff neck, and body aches. They may experience vomiting, a rash, and extreme fatigue. These symptoms usually progress very quickly over 24 hours. Anyone with these symptoms should go to a healthcare provider immediately.

Fast Facts

- Meningococcal disease is most common among 16 – 23 year olds
- 44 college campuses have reported cases of Meningococcal disease between 2013 -2017
- MenB accounts for 50% of all meningococcal disease cases among 17 – 22 year olds
- MenB is responsible for 100% of all meningococcal disease outbreaks on college campuses in the US since 2011
- You cannot get the disease from the vaccine!

The vaccine works by targeting both subfamilies, A and B, of a lipoprotein—factor H binding protein (fHBP) which is found on more than 97% of all MenB strains. This method generates antibodies capable of destroying a range of MenB strains.