

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MENINGITIS

What is Meningococcal Meningitis? Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial illness. It is a leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children 2 through 18 years old in the United States. Meningitis is an infection of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord. Meningococcal disease also causes blood infections. About 1,000-2,600 people get meningococcal disease each year in the U.S. Even when they are treated with antibiotics, 10-15% of these people die. Of those who survive, another 11-19% lose their arms or legs, become deaf, have problems with their nervous systems, become mentally retarded, or suffer seizures or strokes.

Who is at risk? Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but it is most common in infants less than one year of age and people with certain medical conditions, such as lack of a spleen. College students who live on-campus and teenagers 15-19 have increased risk of getting meningococcal disease.

How is it spread? Meningococcal meningitis is spread through the air via respiratory secretions or close contact with an affected person. This can include coughing, sneezing, kissing, or sharing items like utensils, cigarettes and drinking glasses.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS VACCINE

There are two kinds of meningococcal vaccine in the U.S.:

Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) and *Meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine (MPSV4)*

Both vaccines can prevent 4 types of meningococcal disease, including 2 of the 3 types most common in the United States and a type that causes epidemics in Africa. Meningococcal vaccines cannot prevent all types of the disease. But they do protect many people who might become sick if they didn't get the vaccine. Both vaccines work well, and protect about 90% of people who get them.

Want more information? To find out more Meningococcal disease, the vaccines, about people who should not get the meningococcal vaccine or wait and the risks of the vaccine students should contact their doctor or nurse, call their local or state health department or Contact the Center for Disease Control Prevention (www.cdc.gov/vaccines).

TEXAS IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENT (HB 4189)

Texas A&M International University complies with Texas Education Code 51.9192, "The Jaime Schanbaum Act", House Bill 4189 (HB4189) which requires that all first-time students attending an institution of higher education in the state of Texas, including transfer students, who plan to reside in or have applied for University Housing, show evidence of vaccination against bacterial meningitis, allowing for medical or religious exemptions. Evidence of the student having received the vaccination from an appropriate health practitioner must be received by the institution of higher education. The student must have received the vaccination at least 10 days prior to the student taking up residence in University Housing.

WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE OF VACCINATION?

Listed below are the acceptable forms of evidence a student may use to submit to the institution. The documentation must be in English, state the name and other information sufficient to identify the individual who received the required vaccination, and state the month, date and year the required vaccine was administered.

- A. A statement provided by physician or other health care provider authorized by law to administer the required vaccine. The statement must include the name, address, signature or stamp, state of licensure and license number of the physician or other healthcare provider who administered the required vaccination, or of the public health official who administered the required vaccination.
- B. An official immunization record generated from the state or local health authority.
- C. An official record received directly from a Texas school official, or a school official in another state.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO REQUEST AN EXEMPTION/WAIVER?

A student (a parent or guardian of a student under the age of 18), is not required to submit evidence of receiving the vaccination against bacterial meningitis under the following circumstances where the student submits to the institution one (1) of the following:

- A. An affidavit or certificate signed by a physician who is duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the U.S., in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccination required would be injurious to the health and well-being of the student.
- B. An **Exemption From Immunizations for Reasons of Conscience** form signed by the student stating that the student declines the vaccination for bacterial meningitis for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs. The affidavit must be obtained from the Texas Department of State Health Services, <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm> .