

Considerations When Providing Information to Students

- Multiple methods are suggested as the best means to ensure information provision and confirmation of information receipt (e.g., online, postcards, electronic and paper application forms, student orientation, advisor forms, posters, etc.), especially for students who live in dorms and other types of close conditions.
- The Admissions Office is the most likely campus location responsible for obtaining student confirmation of receipt of Bacterial Meningitis information. Be sure to specify that campus location for students.
- Early notification is preferred. Each institution shall make reasonable efforts to obtain from each new student a confirmation signed or acknowledged by the student that the student has received the information and shall retain the confirmation for not less than two years after the student first enrolls at the institution.
- Clarify your institution's policies. Consult the CDC, Texas Department of State Health Services and the ACHA website for current recommendations regarding college and university immunization policies.

For the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html>

For the DSHS website: <http://dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/college-requirements.aspx>

For the ACHA website: www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Topics/Meningitis.aspx

SAMPLE INFORMATION SHEET

Important Information about Bacterial Meningitis

This information is being provided to all new college students in the state of Texas. Bacterial Meningitis is a serious, potentially deadly disease that can progress extremely quickly. It is an inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. The bacteria that causes meningitis can also infect the blood. In 2019, this disease struck about 371 Americans, including students attending college. Treatment for the disease is available, but severe health problems or disabilities are still possible.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- High fever
- Rash or purple patches on skin
- Light sensitivity
- Confusion and sleepiness
- Lethargy
- Severe headache
- Vomiting
- Stiff neck
- Nausea
- Seizures

There may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots caused by bleeding under the skin. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The more symptoms, the higher the risk, so when these symptoms appear seek immediate medical attention.

HOW IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS DIAGNOSED?

Diagnosis is made by a medical provider and is usually based on a combination of clinical symptoms and laboratory results from spinal fluid and blood tests.

Early diagnosis and treatment can greatly improve the likelihood of recovery.

HOW IS THE DISEASE TRANSMITTED?

The disease is transmitted when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, or by sharing drinking containers, utensils, cigarettes, toothbrushes, etc.) or come in contact with respiratory or throat secretions.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR CONTRACTING MENINGITIS?

Individuals exposed to saliva by sharing cigarettes, water bottles, eating utensils, food, kissing, etc. and/or living in close conditions, such as sharing a room/suite in a dorm or group home.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISEASE?

- Death (*following rapid onset of symptoms in 8 to 24 hours*)
- Permanent brain damage
- Kidney failure
- Learning disability
- Hearing loss, blindness
- Limb damage (fingers, toes, arms, legs) that requires amputation
- Gangrene
- Coma
- Convulsions

CAN THE DISEASE BE TREATED?

Antibiotic treatment, if received early, can save lives and chances of recovery are increased. However, permanent disability or death can still occur.

Vaccinations are available and should be considered for those living in close quarters and college students 25 years old or younger.

Vaccinations have proven to be the most effective way to protect against meningitis. Vaccinations take 7-10 days to become effective, with protection lasting 3-5 years. The cost of vaccine varies, so check with your health care provider.

Vaccination is very safe – most common side effects are redness and minor pain at injection site for up to two days.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

Contact your own health care provider.

Contact your Student Health Center at _____ (if available).

Contact your local or regional Texas Department of State Health Services office at _____.

Consult the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html>

Consult the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) website:

http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/meningococcal_invasive/