



Yearly Bacterial Meningococcal Disease and Hepatitis B Notification

Wisconsin State Public Health Law requires that all college and university students living in residence halls receive information regarding these two diseases and the availability of vaccination against them.

You are required to provide your immunization records to Health Services through our online secure portal <https://stnorbert.medicatconnect.com/>. If you do not receive these vaccinations, you must sign a waiver stating that you are unable to get these vaccinations. Waiver forms are available in Health Services located on the second floor of the Mulva Family Fitness and Sports Center.

Wisconsin Statute 252.09 Bacterial Meningococcal Disease and Hepatitis B.

(1) Each private college and university in this state shall do all of the following:

(a) Annually, provide detailed information on the risks associated with meningococcal disease and hepatitis B and the availability and effectiveness of vaccines against the diseases to each enrolled student, if he or she is at least 18 years old, or to the student's parent or guardian, if the student is a minor.

(b) Require a student who resides in a dormitory or residence hall, or the student's parent or guardian if the student is a minor, to affirm that the student received the information under part (a).

(c) Require a student who resides in a dormitory or residence hall to affirm whether he or she has received the vaccination against meningococcal disease and to provide the date of the vaccination, if any.

(d) Require a student who resides in a dormitory or residence hall to affirm whether he or she received the vaccination against hepatitis B and to provide the date of the vaccination, if any.

(e) Maintain a confidential record of the affirmations and the dates of the vaccinations of each student under pars. (c) and (d).

(2) Nothing in this section requires a college or university to provide or pay for vaccinations against meningococcal disease or hepatitis B.

History: 2003 a. 61.

MENINGITIS

What is meningitis? Meningitis is an infection of the fluid of a person's spinal cord and the fluid that surrounds the brain. People sometimes refer to it as spinal meningitis. Meningitis is usually caused by a viral or bacterial infection. Knowing whether meningitis is caused by a virus or bacterium is important because the severity of the illness and the treatment differ. Viral meningitis is generally less severe and resolves without specific treatment, while bacterial meningitis can be quite severe and may result in brain damage, hearing loss, or learning disability. For bacterial meningitis, it is also important to know which type of bacteria is causing the meningitis because antibiotics can prevent some types from spreading and infecting other people.

What are the signs and symptoms of meningitis?

High fever, headache, and stiff neck are common symptoms of meningitis in anyone over the age of 2 years. These symptoms can develop over several hours, or they may take 1 to 2 days. Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. As the disease progresses, patients of any age may have seizures.

How is meningitis diagnosed?

Early diagnosis and treatment are very important. If symptoms occur, the patient should see a doctor immediately. The diagnosis is usually made by growing bacteria from a sample of spinal fluid. Identification of the type of bacteria responsible is important for selection of correct antibiotics.

Can meningitis be treated?

Bacterial meningitis can be treated with a number of effective antibiotics. It is important, however, that treatment be started early in the course of the disease. Appropriate antibiotic treatment of most common types of bacterial meningitis should reduce the risk of dying from meningitis to below 15%, although the risk is higher among the elderly.

Is meningitis contagious?

Yes, some forms of bacterial meningitis are contagious. The bacteria are spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions (e.g., coughing, kissing). Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis is as contagious as things like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. However, sometimes the bacteria that cause meningitis have spread to other people who have had close or prolonged contact with a patient with meningitis caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* (also called meningococcal meningitis). People in the same household or day-care center, or anyone with direct contact with a patient's oral secretions (such as a boyfriend or girlfriend) would be considered at increased risk of acquiring the infection. People who qualify as close contacts of a person with meningitis caused by *N. meningitidis* should receive antibiotics to prevent them from getting the disease. There is also a vaccine that protects against four strains of *N. meningitidis*. College freshmen, especially those who live in residence halls are at higher risk for meningococcal disease and should be educated about the availability of a safe and effective vaccine that can decrease their risk. Additional information may be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/bacterial.html>

HEPATITIS B

Hepatitis B is inflammation of the liver caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). You can be exposed to get hepatitis B by direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person through having sex with someone infected with HBV; having sex with more than one partner; shared needle drug use; working with human blood in labs or treatment centers; babies can get hepatitis B from an infected mother during childbirth. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, fever, stomach or joint pain. You may feel extremely tired and not be able to work for weeks or months. Cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer can be complications to hepatitis B infection.

Is there a cure for hepatitis B?

There are medications available to treat long-lasting (chronic) HBV infection. These work for some people, but there is no cure for hepatitis B when you first get it. That is why prevention is so important.

Hepatitis B vaccine is the best protection against HBV. Three doses are commonly needed for complete protection and all children 0-18 years of age who have not been vaccinated should be. Persons of any age whose behavior puts them at high risk for HBV infection. Persons whose jobs expose them to human blood.

This information is from the CDC's website; additional information may be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/b/faqb.htm>