

Wisconsin State Statute Meningococcal Disease and Hepatitis B

Wisconsin colleges and universities are required to provide all enrolled students each year detailed information on the risks associated with Meningococcal disease and Hepatitis B and the availability and effectiveness of vaccines against these diseases. Colleges and universities must ensure each student who resides in campus housing affirms that she/he has received the information and if the student has been vaccinated against either disease, provides the date of the vaccination(s). To comply with this requirement, all students living on the St. Norbert College campus are provided information about these diseases with their housing contract. Students living on campus affirm their receipt of this information when signing their housing contract.

Any vaccination records should be sent to Health Services. New incoming students will receive Meningococcal disease and Hepatitis B information with the health history form. Failure to return the health history form and affirmation signature will result in the inability to register for classes or receive a transcript.

Meningococcal Disease

Meningococcal disease is a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as Meningitis. It is recommended by U.S. health officials that college students, particularly freshmen living in residence halls, learn more about Meningitis and the available vaccine.

Meningitis is rare; however, this potentially fatal bacterial disease can lead to swelling of the brain and spinal column as well as severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizure, limb amputation and even death.

Meningococcal disease is spread by close contact with respiratory secretions of an infected person (i.e., coughing, sneezing, kissing, sharing utensils, cigarettes, drinking glasses). Symptoms often resemble the flu and can include high fever, severe headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, rash, lethargy and confusion.

Certain college students, particularly freshmen living on campus, have been found to have a six fold increased risk for Meningitis. Risk for the disease can be reduced through the availability of a safe and effective vaccine. This vaccine has been proven to be 85-100% effective in protecting against four of the five most common strains of the disease. The vaccine provides protection for approximately three to five years.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a viral infection of the liver that may lead to chronic liver disease, cirrhosis or liver cancer. It is a major health problem in the United States infecting more than 1 million people.

You can acquire the infection through contact with blood or body fluids from an infected person. Hepatitis B is a hardy virus that can live in dried blood or body fluids on clothes or other surfaces for an extended length of time. Common ways of getting the disease include:

- * exposure to a person's blood or body fluids through cuts, scrapes, needle sticks or needle sharing
- * Through blood or body fluid exposure to the eyes, nose or mouth
- * Through sexual contact
- * Through contact between an infected mother and her newborn child during birth and early infancy

Although there is no specific treatment for Hepatitis B, there are safe and effective vaccines available to help prevent infection. The vaccination series consists of three doses given over a 6-12 month period of time. The vaccine is 90% effective for adults and 95% effective for infants, children and adolescents who complete the three dose vaccination series.