

CLARKE UNIVERSITY

Health Services

Meningococcal Disease Information

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends meningitis vaccination for all adolescents.

Meningococcal disease is a rare but life-threatening illness. Commonly called meningitis, the disease is caused by bacteria that infect the blood, brain and spinal cord. The disease is spread person-to-person resulting in an increased risk for populated settings such as campus residence halls. You can catch meningitis from a person who looks healthy through close personal contact (coughing, kissing, sharing eating utensils or drinking glasses). Even with proper treatment, 10-15% of people with meningococcal disease die. Of the people who survive, as many as 20% suffer from serious complications such as loss of a limb, brain damage or permanent hearing loss. Meningitis can cause shock, coma and death within hours of the first symptom. The disease most often strikes older teens and young adults. Vaccination is the best way to prevent meningitis.

The three different types of meningitis vaccines are: MCV4 (conjugate), MPSV4 (polysaccharide) and MenB (serogroup B). MCV4 or MPSV4 protect against serogroups A, C, W or Y and are given to preteens and teens beginning at age 16. **Teens and young adults age 16-23 may also be given MenB (a vaccine to protect against meningococcal serogroup B disease). Please talk to your health care provider about these vaccines.**

Meningitis symptoms can be mistaken for the flu and may include fever, headache, stiff neck, vomiting, sensitivity to light, confusion and rash. Meningococcal disease can progress very rapidly and can kill an otherwise healthy young person in 48 hours or less.

For more information about meningococcal disease and immunization, visit the following web sites:

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

www.voicesofmeningitis.com

www.nmaus.org

**Clarke University Health Services (563-588-6374)
Dubuque, Iowa**