



SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY

Student Health Services
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182-4701
TEL: 619-594-4325
FAX: 619-594-3638
<http://shs.sdsu.edu>

Memo

From: Gregg Lichtenstein, MD, MBA, Director, Student Health Services

Date: July 20, 2015

Subject: Update on Meningococcal Vaccines

This update has been prompted by the recent release of new vaccines that are protective against one kind (“serogroup”) of meningococcal bacteria and a recent change in recommendations from the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

Meningococcal disease is a **serious** illness caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis* that infect the blood or membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord. It can lead to brain damage, disability and death. The two most common forms of meningococcal disease are meningitis (a bacterial infection of the fluid and covering of the spinal cord and brain) and septicemia, an infection of the bloodstream. Meningitis has other causes as well, the most common being viral infection. Meningococcal disease is most common in infants and in people with certain medical conditions. College **freshmen**, particularly those who live in **residence halls**, have a modestly increased risk of getting the disease. About 100 cases occur on college campuses in the U.S. each year, with 5-15 of those cases resulting in death. Most of the cases occur sporadically, affecting only a single individual, but there have been outbreaks on college campuses and elsewhere when one person infects others, generally through oral secretions transmitted by sharing drinks or cigarettes, or by coughs. Other people with **certain medication conditions are at high risk** for meningococcal infection such as those with their spleens removed by surgery or not working because of sickle cell anemia, and those with certain deficiencies of complement components, part of the body’s immune system

Two types of meningococcal **vaccines** that can reduce your chances of becoming ill are available from your doctor or SDSU Student Health Services. One vaccine (brand names, Menactra[®] and Menveo[®]) has been available for over 10 year and protects against four types or serogroups (A,C,W,Y) of this bacteria. However in late 2014 and early 2015, another vaccine (Trumenba[®] and Bexsero[®]) was released to provide protection against another serogroup, B. Serogroups B, C, and Y cause most of the illness in the U.S, but at this time, there is no single vaccine that provides protection against all 3. Vaccine protection lasts 3-5 years and can prevent 50-70% of cases on college campuses.

The vaccine for meningococcal serogroups A, C, W, & Y (Menactra[®] or Menveo[®]) is recommended for all 11-18 year olds, and also for freshmen living in on- campus housing as they are at increased risk of contracting this potential deadly infection. A booster dose is recommended at age 16-18 for those who received their first vaccination at age 15 or younger. Other students wishing to reduce their risk of meningitis may also choose to be vaccinated with A/C/W/Y vaccine.

Serogroup B vaccine (Trumenba[®] or Bexsero[®]) is recommended for high risk individuals age 10 years or greater, but may be administered to 16-23 year olds (preferably at ages 16-18) as desired.

As vaccines typically take several weeks before they provide adequate protection, Student Health Services recommends you consider immunization with both types of vaccines before arrival at SDSU, but they may also be administered after that time.

If you have questions, contact SDSU Student Health Services at (619) 594-4325 or visit the websites for the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and [American College Health Association](#).