

What causes Meningococcal Disease?

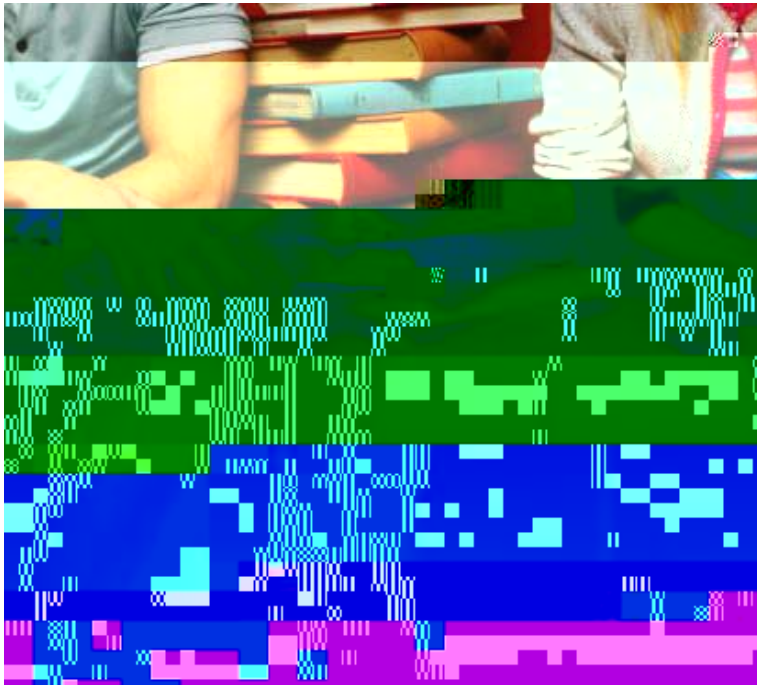
Caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria. The two most common forms of meningococcal disease are **meningitis** (bacterial infection of the fluid and covering of the spinal cord and brain) and **meningococemia** (an infection of the bloodstream). Meningitis can also be caused by other bacteria and viruses.

How Are Meningococcal Bacteria Spread?

The bacteria are spread from person to person in secretions from the nose and throat. An infected person can pass it on by activities such as kissing, sharing cigarettes, lipstick, lip balm, and drink containers, including soda cans and water bottles. The bacteria can live outside the body for only a few minutes; if the germs contaminate a desk or book, they soon die and won't infect a person who touches it later. Overall, 5-10% of the U.S. population

Who Is Likely to Get It?

College students are *less* likely to get meningococcal disease than other people their age (18-23 years old). However, college freshmen living in student housing are more likely to get the disease than college and university students as a whole. Also, living with a smoker increases the chance for getting the disease.



Off to College?

Before you start college, make sure you are up-to-date on all your immunizations: measles, mumps, rubella; tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis; varicella; and hepatitis B.

Get the meningococcal vaccine if you will be living on-campus in student housing.

What you should know about meningococcal disease:

- Meningococcal (me-nin-je-kok-ul) disease is a serious illness caused by bacteria that can infect the blood or areas around the brain and spinal cord. Infection can lead to brain damage, disability, and rapid death.
- Meningitis is the most common form of meningococcal disease. Common symptoms of meningitis include stiff neck, headache, and high fever.
- College freshmen, particularly those who live in student housing, are more likely to get the disease. About 100 cases occur on U.S. college campuses each year resulting in 5-15 deaths.
- Meningococcal vaccine can protect against four of the five most common groups of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease.

Students in On-Campus Housing:

I have reviewed both sides of this information flyer and . . .

- I **already** received the meningococcal vaccine.
- I **intend** to receive meningococcal vaccine.
- I **do not intend** to receive meningococcal vaccine.

Print Name _____

Student ID # _____

Date ____/____/____

Signature _____

Return signed form to
Housing and Residential Education office