Meningitis Policy and Form

Ottawa University

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Meningitis Policy

Ottawa University

- requires all students residing in Ottawa University residence halls to receive the meningitis vaccination; or sign a waiver to indicate that they have chosen not to be immunized.
- strongly recommends that students living in other forms of group housing such as shared houses and apartments receive the vaccination;
- encourages all other students to consider vaccination; and
- encourages all students to become knowledgeable about meningitis and its symptoms in order to reduce their personal risk.

All students starting residence in University-owned residential housing must ***either*** provide written documentation of immunization ***or*** sign a waiver to indicate they have been informed about the disease and vaccine, and have chosen not to be immunized. Non-compliant students will be placed on ***Administrative HOLD*** following the first week of classes and remain on ***Administrative HOLD*** until the compliance is documented with the University Health Services Clinic (UHSC) in Mowbray Student Union.

"Administrative HOLD" means that the student is unable to attend classes, enroll in future semesters, obtain transcripts, or obtain a diploma.

We also encourage all Ottawa University students to consider getting the vaccine to reduce their risk.

Meningitis Health and Waiver Information

What is meningococcal meningitis?

It is a severe bacterial infection of the bloodstream and meninges (a thin lining covering the brain and spinal cord). It is a relatively rare disease and usually occurs as a single isolated event. Cluster of cases or outbreaks are also possible.

Who gets meningococcal meningitis?

Anyone can get meningococcal meningitis, but it is more common in infants, children and young adults. Also, college students who live in Residence Halls have a slightly higher risk of getting this infection than others their age.

How is it transmitted?

The meningococcal germ is spread by direct close contact with nose or throat discharges of an infected person. Many people carry this particular germ without any signs of illness, while others may develop serious symptoms.

What are symptoms are associated?

Although most people exposed to the meningococcus germ do not become seriously ill, some may develop fever, headache, vomiting, stiff neck and a rash. Up to 25 percent of patients who recover may have permanent damage to the nervous system. The disease occasionally causes death.

What is the incubation time?

The symptoms may appear two to ten days after exposure, but usually within five days.

Meningitis Health and Waiver Information, continued

When and for how long is an infected person able to spread the disease?

From the time a person is first infected until the germ is no longer present in discharges from the nose and throat, he or she may transmit the disease. The duration varies among individuals and with the treatment used.

How is it treated?

Antibiotics and sulfa drugs can be effective in most cases of meningococcal infection, if given early in the disease. Penicillin is the drug of choice for meningitis.

Should people who have been in contact with a diagnosed case of meningococcal meningitis be treated?

Only people who have been in close contact (household members, intimate contacts, healthcare personnel performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, day care center play-mates) need to be considered for preventative treatment. Such people are usually advised to obtain a prescription for Rifampin from their physician. Casual contact as might occur in a regular classroom, office or factory setting is not usually significant enough to cause concern. People who think they have been exposed to meningococcal infection should contact their local health department to discuss whether they should receive preventive treatment.

What types of vaccines are available?

The current meningococcal vaccine can prevent four important types of meningococcal disease, including two of the three types most common in the United States and a type that causes epidemics in Africa. It does not prevent all types of the disease, but can help protect many people who might become ill.

Meningitis Waiver

This section is mandatory to complete the contracting process—no contract will be processed without this section completed.

Ottawa University established policies and procedures that require all incoming students residing in University housing to be vaccinated for meningitis or to sign a waiver indicating that they decline to take the vaccine. Please read the material provided on meningococcal meningitis, information on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommendation regarding vaccination, and the availability of the vaccination through the Ottawa University Health Center and Office of Student Affairs.

- ❑ I have received the Meningococcal (meningitis) immunization on _____ (date). Please attach copy of documentation of immunization.

- ❑ I have chosen NOT to be immunized (meningitis). I received and read the material related to meningitis. (Select this if you choose to waive or plan to get the vaccination at a later date—please contact the Office of Student Affairs when you have a vaccination date.)

Student's Name (please print) ID#

Student's Signature Date

Parent or Guardian's Signature (if student is under 18 years of age) Date

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