



# DEPAUW UNIVERSITY

Est. 1837

## Health Services: Immunization information

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### Recommended vaccinations

#### **Meningitis**

Recently, there has been increasing publicity regarding meningitis spread on college campuses and the need for the meningitis vaccine. The following information addresses the most frequently asked questions about the disease and the vaccine. The vaccine is available at the Health Service. Call our office for current pricing.

#### *What is meningitis and meningococcal infection?*

Meningitis is an infection that can lead to a dangerous swelling of the membrane surrounding the brain and spinal cord. The disease can be caused by either viruses or bacteria. The symptoms you feel and how a doctor treats the infection depend on what kind of organism is causing it. If meningococcal infection goes untreated, it can lead to permanent disabilities such as hearing loss, brain damage or seizures; it can even lead to death. If caught early, meningitis is curable in most cases. Of course, it is even better to prevent the disease altogether.

#### *Viral vs. bacterial meningitis*

There are two kinds of meningitis, each caused by a different type of organism:

**Viral meningitis:** This is the more common form of the disease. Viral meningitis is usually not as serious as bacterial meningitis, and patients usually get better with minimal treatment. There is no vaccine available to protect against viral meningitis.

**Bacterial meningitis:** This form of the disease is often referred to as meningococcal meningitis.

Signs and symptoms of meningococcal infection may include fever, headache and stiff neck, occasionally with a rash or vomiting and sometimes with lethargy or change in consciousness. If you experience these symptoms, you should seek immediate medical evaluation. Because it can be easily spread, meningococcal meningitis can cause outbreaks in a specific area, such as a college campus. Infection can cause serious illness, long-lasting effects on the nervous system, or death within 24 to 48 hours. Meningitis vaccination is 85-100% effective against strains A, C, Y, and W-135. The vaccine is not effective against strain B which accounts for 46% of all cases.

#### *Why are college students at greater risk?*

College students have a greater risk of meningococcal infection than the general population because of activities that are often a part of college life, such as smoking, being around someone who smokes (passive smoking), going out to bars, drinking alcohol, and living in a dormitory. The infection is easily spread through direct contact with oral secretion (e.g. through coughing, sharing of utensils, or kissing).

#### *What are the risks from the meningitis vaccine?*

A vaccine, like any medication, is capable of causing serious problems such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of meningitis vaccine causing serious harm or death is extremely small. Adverse reactions to meningococcal vaccine are mild and consist principally of a transient fever or pain and redness at the site of injection for 1-2 days.



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Severe reactions are very rare but include high fever, behavior changes, difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives paleness, weakness, fast heartbeat, or dizziness.

If you have questions about meningitis or the vaccine, contact Student Health Services at 658-4555.

### **Influenza "The Flu "**

You suddenly ache all over, have fever, chills, dry cough, sore throat and feel generally weak and tired. What is wrong??? You probably have the flu. And you probably didn't get the free flu shot which is offered annually by Student Health Services. Free flu shots for students are available beginning mid-October, either at the Wellness Center during office hours or at the UB & Women's Center on certain days in October (check the DePauw Weekly for dates & times).

If you had a flu shot last year, you will need to get a new one to protect you this season. The viruses that cause influenza change often. Because of this, the vaccine is updated each year. Protection develops about 2 weeks after the shot.

Consult with a doctor before getting an influenza vaccination if you:

- Ever had a **SERIOUS** allergic reaction to eggs or a previous dose of influenza vaccine
- Have a history of Guilliam-Barre Syndrome
- Are moderately or severely ill at the time the shot is to be given

The viruses in the flu vaccine are killed so you cannot get influenza from the vaccine. Side effects are minimal and may include soreness or redness at the site of injection, low fever or aches.

Besides the flu shot, other ways you can protect yourself against the flu include:

- washing your hands often
- keeping your body healthy with good food, exercise and enough rest
- stop smoking! Smoking makes your respiratory tract more prone to infections

If you decide not to get the flu shots, here are some things you can do if you think you have the flu:

- See Student Health Services. Other illnesses can mimic the flu but may need different treatment. There is prescription anti-viral medicine available if taken within 24 hours of onset of the flu. This may lessen the duration of the illness but will not destroy the virus. **ANTIBIOTICS ARE NOT EFFECTIVE AGAINST THE FLU OR ANY OTHER VIRAL INFECTION.**
- Rest - Go to bed! The more rest you get early on in the disease, the easier it will be to overcome the illness.
- Fluids - Plenty of water, juice or ginger ale / sprite to combat dehydration.
- For fever, aches and headache - use ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol)



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### TRAVEL VACCINATIONS—What You Need to Know

**Measles** is a highly contagious rash illness due to a virus transmitted by direct contact with infectious droplets or by airborne spread. Onset of illness is characterized by fever, cough, runny nose, & rash. It can be severe & complications may include diarrhea, middle ear infection, pneumonia, & encephalitis.

- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella): 2 doses, given at 1 yr. old & again at 4-6 yrs. old - lifetime immunity

**Tetanus** is an acute disease caused by *Clostridium tetani* spores, which produce neurotoxins, causing muscle rigidity, painful spasms, respiratory failure & death. Wounds that are considered “tetanus prone” are those contaminated with dirt, feces or saliva, deep wounds, burns, crush injuries, or even insect bites.

- TD (tetanus /diphtheria): “Basic series” given at 2 mos, 4mos, 6 mos, 15-18 mos & again at 4-6 yrs. old-repeated every 10 years

**Poliomyelitis** is an acute viral infection causing inflammation of the spinal cord. It is characterized by fever, sore throat, headache, vomiting, stiffness of the back & neck, & may progress to paralysis, respiratory failure, & rarely, death. It is acquired by fecal-oral or oral transmission.

- Polio: Same schedule for “basic series” as for Td-repeated once as an adult, only if traveling to an at-risk area

**Hepatitis A** is a viral infection of the liver caused by hepatitis A virus (HAV). Symptoms may vary in severity & include fever, malaise, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort, followed within a few days by jaundice. Transmission can occur through direct person-to person contact; through exposure to contaminated water, ice, or shellfish harvested in contaminated water; or from fruits, vegetables, or other foods that are eaten uncooked & that were contaminated during harvesting or subsequent handling.

- Hepatitis A: Series of 2 doses, with second dose given 6-12 months after first-gives 20-year immunity

**Hepatitis B** is a viral infection of the liver caused by hepatitis B virus (HBV). It may manifest with flu-like symptoms, jaundice, or no symptoms at all & is transmitted directly or indirectly through infected body fluids.

- Hepatitis B: Series of 3 doses, with first 2 doses given one month apart & third dose 6 months after the first-gives 20-year immunity

- Hepatitis A/B combination--given on same schedule as Hepatitis B

\***Varicella (chickenpox):** For adults, 2 doses given 4-8 weeks apart

**Meningitis:** One dose gives 8-year immunity

**Typhoid:** Given 2 ways

1) 4 pills taken one every other day over a 1-week period- gives 5-year immunity-may get prescription at Health Services

2) One shot-gives 2-year immunity



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**Yellow Fever:** One shot gives 10-year immunity-given at only State-approved sites-available at IU Health Center, in Bloomington, IN

**\*Rabies:** Series of 3 doses with second dose given 1 week after first dose & third dose 2 weeks after second dose

**\*Japanese Encephalitis:** Series of 3, given on same schedule as Rabies Vaccine

*\*These vaccines are available at Student Health Services by special order only.*

**To find out what is needed for a particular location: [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)**