

Meningococcal Disease for College Students

New Jersey law requires that certain students receive meningococcal vaccines!



Are you protected?

Students attending college are at higher risk of getting meningococcal disease, especially first-year students living in residence halls.

Get vaccinated!

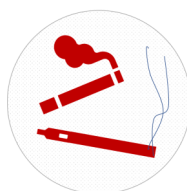
What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal (muh-nin-jo-cok-ul) disease is a serious bacterial infection caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*. The bacteria can invade the body, leading to severe swelling of the tissue surrounding the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) or bloodstream infection. Both of these types of infections are very serious and can be deadly in a matter of hours. Even with antibiotic treatment, 10 to 15 in 100 people infected with meningococcal disease will die. Up to 1 in 5 survivors will have long-term disabilities, such as loss of limb(s), deafness, nervous system problems, or brain damage.

How do people get meningococcal disease?

People spread meningococcal bacteria by sharing respiratory and throat secretions (saliva/spit). Generally, the bacteria are spread by close or lengthy contact with a person who has meningococcal disease such as:

- People in the same household
- Roommates
- Anyone with direct contact with the patient's oral secretions such as through kissing or sharing eating utensils, cigarettes/vaping devices, and food.



What are the symptoms of meningococcal disease?

Symptoms can progress quickly and may include:

- high fever
- headache
- stiff neck
- confusion
- sensitivity to light
- nausea
- vomiting
- exhaustion
- purplish rash

Some people carry the bacteria in their noses and throat, but they don't become ill. Even though they do not have symptoms, they can still spread the bacteria to others.

How can I protect myself from meningococcal disease?

The best way to protect yourself from meningococcal disease is to **get vaccinated**. There are two types of meningococcal vaccines that protect against the common serogroups (A, B, C, W, Y) of the bacteria:

- Meningococcal conjugate or MenACWY vaccines (Menveo® or Menactra®)
- Serogroup B meningococcal or MenB vaccines (Bexsero® or Trumenba®)



For more information, please visit <https://nj.gov/health/cd/topics/meningo.shtml>, or contact the NJDOH Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at 609-826-4861.

Do I need meningococcal vaccines to attend a college in New Jersey?

If you are a new student enrolling in a public or private institution of higher education in New Jersey, you are required by state law (*P.L. 2019, c.332 (N.J.S.A.18A:62-15.1)*) to receive meningococcal vaccines as recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC recommends:

MenACWY (Menactra® and Menveo®) vaccine is routinely recommended at ages 11-12 years with a booster dose at 16 years. Adolescents who receive their first dose of MenACWY vaccine on or after their 16th birthday do not need a booster dose. Additional doses may be recommended based on risk. People 19 years of age and older are not routinely recommended to receive the MenACWY vaccine unless they are first-year college students living in residential housing or if another risk factor applies.

MenB (Bexsero® and Trumenba®) vaccine is routinely recommended for people ages 10 years or older with high-risk health conditions. People 16-23 years old (preferably at ages 16-18 years) may also choose to get a MenB vaccine.

Below is a summary of requirements based on student age and risk.

By age indication		
Age	MenACWY Requirement	MenB Requirement
≤18 years of age, not at increased risk	Vaccine required	Vaccine not required*
≥19 years of age, not at increased risk	Vaccine not required	Vaccine not required*
By increased risk indication†		
Indication	MenACWY Requirement	MenB Requirement
First-year college student living in residence hall or military recruit	Vaccine required	Vaccine not required
Complement component deficiency or use of a medication known as a complement inhibitor (e.g., eculizumab)	Vaccine required	Vaccine required
No spleen or problem with spleen – including sickle cell disease	Vaccine required	Vaccine required
HIV infection	Vaccine required	Vaccine not required
Travel to an area where the disease is common. Check www.cdc.gov/travel for travel-related risk.	Vaccine required	Vaccine not required
Work in a laboratory with meningococcal bacteria (<i>Neisseria meningitidis</i>)	Vaccine required	Vaccine required
Part of an outbreak as declared by public health officials— you will be notified if this applies	Vaccine required if outbreak caused by serogroup A, C, W or Y	Vaccine required if outbreak caused by serogroup B

*Though MenB vaccination is not required, persons 16-23 years old may choose to receive MenB vaccine to provide short-term protection against most strains of MenB disease. Learn more about meningococcal disease and MenB vaccination at: www.cdc.gov/meningococcal.

†Check with your healthcare provider to determine the best vaccine series and booster schedule for you.

Are these vaccines safe?

Meningococcal vaccines are safe and effective. As with all vaccines, there can be minor reactions, including pain and redness at the injection site or a mild fever. Severe side effects, such as a serious allergic reaction, are very rare.

Where can I get these vaccines?

In accordance with *P.L. 2019, c.332*, each institution must offer required meningococcal vaccines through the student health service or through a contracted agreement with a community health provider. Most insurance plans cover recommended vaccines. If you are under 19 years of age, ask your healthcare provider if they participate in the New Jersey Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. You may qualify for free or low-cost vaccines. You can also check with college health services, local health departments, and federally qualified health centers regarding vaccine affordability.