

INFORMATION ON MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE AND HEPATITIS B

MUSC highly recommends that all students be immunized against Meningococcal Disease and Hepatitis B as recommended by the American College Health Association (ACHA) and the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Meningococcal Disease

Overview and Transmission

Meningococcal disease is a contagious illness that can progress rapidly. The bacteria spread from person to person through respiratory droplets, such as those released when coughing or sneezing, and through direct contact with an infected person, such as kissing.

Health Risks

If not treated early, meningococcal disease can result in death or permanent disability. Among those who survive, about one in five experience long-term effects, such as brain damage, hearing loss, seizures, or limb amputation.

Who Is at Risk

Meningococcal disease can affect people of any age. Infection rates are highest during infancy, with a second peak during adolescence. Each year, approximately 1,100 cases of invasive meningococcal disease occur in the United States, and 21% of cases occur among adolescents and young adults ages 14–24.

College students living in residence halls are at higher risk than the general college population because of factors such as:

- Crowded living conditions
- Bar patronage
- Smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke
- Irregular sleep patterns
- Sharing personal items

Vaccination Recommendations

In the United States, potentially vaccine-preventable strains account for 73% of meningococcal disease cases among people age 11 and older. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College Health Association recommend the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) for all first-year college students living in residence halls. This vaccine protects against four of the five most common strains of *Neisseria meningitidis*: A, C, Y, and W.

A separate vaccine is available to protect against the fifth common strain, serogroup B (*N. meningitidis* MenB). The MenB vaccine is highly recommended for individuals at increased risk of meningococcal disease, including those with compromised immune systems due to disease or immunosuppressive therapy.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B vaccine is a mandatory requirement for all clinical courses at MUSC. Hepatitis B is a contagious liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus. A new infection may be acute and can range from a mild illness with few or no symptoms to a serious condition requiring hospitalization. Some people clear the virus, while others develop a chronic, lifelong infection. Over time, chronic hepatitis B can lead to serious health problems, including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver failure, and liver cancer. Each year, approximately 3,000 people in the United States and more than 600,000 people worldwide die from hepatitis B–related liver disease. In the United States, hepatitis B is spread through sexual contact. The virus is 50 to 100 times more infectious than HIV and can be transmitted through body fluids, including semen, vaginal fluids, and blood. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vaccination is the best way to prevent hepatitis B. For adults, hepatitis B vaccination may be given as a two- or three-dose series, depending on the vaccine used. Completing the full series is necessary for long-term protection.

To obtain additional immunization information please visit the following website: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

South Carolina Code Ann. § 59--101--290 (2002) requires public institutions of higher learning to notify incoming students under the age of 18 in on-campus housing (parents or guardians for minors) of the risks of meningococcal disease and Hepatitis B. Public institutions of higher learning are to include recommendation for meningococcal vaccine in medical information given to students, prospective students, and parents or guardians.