A Message from your Student Health Center

Re: Meningococcal Vaccine

Dear Pittsburg State University Student and Parent:

We, the staff at Pittsburg State University Student Health Services, would like to take this opportunity to inform you regarding vaccination to prevent meningococcal disease in college students. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, as well as the CDC (Center for Disease Control) recommends the meningitis vaccine be given to college freshman living in dormitories. Recently, the Kansas Board of Regents mandated state universities to require all incoming students residing in university housing be vaccinated for meningitis or to sign a waiver indicating that they decline to take the vaccine.

Meningococcal disease is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis. Recent studies of college outbreaks suggest that freshmen living in residence halls have a modestly higher risk of contracting this disease because they live and work in close proximity to each other. The student’s lifestyle may also contribute to risk. Exposure to active and passive smoking, alcohol consumption and bar patronage (with or without alcohol consumption) all increase the risk of contracting meningitis from an infected person.

**NEW 2011 CDC RECOMMENDATION FOR ROUTINE MENIGITIS VACCINATION**

Two doses of MCV4 are recommended for adolescents 11 through 18 years of age; the first at 11 or 12 years of age, with a booster at age 16.

If the first dose (or series) is given between 13 and 15 years of age, the booster should be given between 16 and 18. IF the first dose (or series) is given after the 16th birthday, a booster is not needed.

**For further information regarding meningococcal disease and recommended vaccination, please read the attached information sheet.**

Pittsburg State Student Health Center is taking a proactive approach in providing information and supportive access to the meningococcal disease vaccine. The meningitis vaccine, Menevo, is available at the health services for $90.00.

If you meet the criteria for Vaccines for Children Program you may be eligible to receive this immunization at a reduced fee at your hometown health department or local physician’s office. In addition, the Crawford County Health Department in Pittsburg (620-231-5411) can give this immunization under the Vaccines for Children Program.

The criteria for the Vaccines for Children Program are:

- You have no health insurance
- Your insurance does not cover immunizations
- You have health wave or Medicaid
- You are an American or Alaskan native
- It must be BEFORE your 19th birthday.

At PSU, we believe the meningococcal vaccine is an important step to ensuring a healthy college educational experience. If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at 620-235-4452.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kathleen Sandness
Medical Director, Student Health Services