

## **Questions and Answers about Meningococcal Meningitis**

### **What is meningococcal meningitis?**

It is a rare but potentially fatal disease. It is an inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord. This disease is caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis*.

### **What are the symptoms?**

The common symptoms of meningitis are high fever, headache and stiff neck. Other symptoms include nausea, vomiting or photophobia.

### **How is it diagnosed?**

Patients should consult their health provider as soon as possible if they have signs or symptoms of meningitis. Patients will be evaluated and some of the necessary tests may be blood work, spinal tap and appropriate cultures.

### **Can bacterial meningitis be treated?**

Yes, it can be treated with antibiotics. Treatment should be started as early as possible.

### **Is meningitis contagious?**

Yes, it is contagious. It is not as contagious as the flu, but close or prolonged contact with a person who has meningitis is a risk. Close contacts should receive antibiotics to prevent infection.

### **Are there vaccines against meningitis?**

Yes, there are two vaccines available for Meningococcal infection. Both vaccines are safe and effective. Both vaccines provide protection from 2 of the 3 most common types of meningococcal disease.

### **Who should get the vaccine?**

The Center for Disease Control recommends the vaccine for children/teens ages 11-18 and college freshman living in residence halls.

### **Where can you get the vaccine?**

Your Health provider may offer it. On Campus, you can obtain the vaccine at the Student Health Service.

### **For more information:**

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/default.htm>