

INFORMATION ON MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE AND VACCINE

MUSC highly recommends that all students be immunized against Meningococcal Disease 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).

About Meningococcal Disease

Meningococcal meningitis is a rare but potentially fatal, bacterial infection that strikes 1,400 to 3,000 Americans each year and is responsible for approximately 150 to 300 deaths. Adolescents and young adults account for nearly 30 percent of all cases of meningitis in the United States. In addition, approximately 100 to 125 cases of meningococcal disease occur on college campuses each year, and 5 to 15 students will die as a result.

Due to lifestyle factors, such as crowded living situations, bar patronage, active or passive smoking, irregular sleep patterns, and sharing personal items, freshman college students living in residence halls have a six times higher risk of meningococcal disease than college students overall.

Meningococcal infection is contagious, particularly in crowded conditions such as residence halls. Symptoms may include fever, stiff neck, rash, nausea and vomiting. The disease progresses very rapidly and can easily be misdiagnosed as the flu. Students should seek medical attention if any of these symptoms are present and occur unusually sudden or severe.

About the Vaccine

The meningococcal vaccine (Menactra) covers four of the five common meningococcal serotypes (A, C, Y, W-135) but does not cover serotype B meningococcal disease, which is responsible for about 30 percent of cases in college students. The vaccine is considered safe and adverse reactions are mild, i.e. redness and tenderness at injection site. Only a single dose is needed and development of immunity post-vaccination requires 7-9 days. The need for, or timing of a booster dose of Menactra has not yet been determined.

To obtain additional immunization information please visit the following website: <http://www.cdc.gov>.

South Carolina Code Ann. § 59-101-290 (2002) requires public institutions of higher learning to notify incoming students in on-campus housing (parents or guardians for minors) of the risks of meningococcal disease. Public institutions of higher learning are to include recommendation for meningococcal vaccine in medical information given to students, prospective students, and parents or guardians. (HB 5133)

Proof of vaccination or a signed waiver declining the vaccine is required.

I have read the above information concerning the meningococcal infection /vaccine and:

_____ I do not wish to receive the meningococcal vaccine.

_____ I have provided proof of vaccination on the MUSC immunization form.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Printed Name _____

College _____