

August 13, 2003

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bacterial Meningitis-What You Need To Know Before Heading Back To College

Bacterial meningitis is a serious illness, caused by a bacteria. It is an infection of the brain and spinal cord coverings and the disease can also cause blood infections.

About 2,600 people get bacterial meningitis each year in the U.S. 10-15% of these people die, in spite of treatment with antibiotics. Of those who live, another 10% lose their arms or legs, become deaf, have problems with their nervous systems, become mentally handicapped or suffer seizures or strokes.

Meningococcal vaccine can prevent 4 types of meningococcal disease, which include 2 of the 3 types most common in the U.S. Because college freshmen, particularly those who live in dormitories, have a slightly increased risk of getting meningococcal disease, the vaccination may be given to college students who choose to be vaccinated.

Some people, however, should not get the meningococcal vaccine or should wait. These people include:

- People who have ever had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine.
- People with moderate or severe illnesses should usually wait until they recover.

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency offers this vaccination at their four office locations: Coldwater, Hillsdale, Three Rivers and Sturgis. For more information or to schedule an appointment call location nearest you for an appointment. Coldwater: 517-279-9561 ext. 135, Hillsdale: 517-437-7395 ext. 136, Three Rivers: 616-273-2161 ext. 208, Sturgis: 616-659-4013 ext. 121.