



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH



NEWS RELEASE

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New Meningococcal Immunization Required for Some Students Entering College This Fall

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health and the North Dakota University System are informing parents and college students about the new immunization requirement for meningococcal vaccine implemented by the North Dakota University System.

For entry into North Dakota colleges and universities this fall, newly admitted students ages 21 and younger residing in campus housing must provide documentation of immunity against meningococcal disease. Students must provide evidence of at least one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) in the five years prior to enrollment or evidence of two doses of MCV4 administered at ages 10 or older and at least eight weeks apart. Two doses of MCV4 vaccine are routinely recommended for all adolescents at ages 11 and 16. The new requirement only affects facilities under the North Dakota University System, not private facilities. Students enrolling in private facilities should contact that university or college to find out their immunization requirements.

“Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria and is a severe infection of the bloodstream and the thin lining covering the brain and spinal cord,” said Molly Sander, Immunization Program manager for the North Dakota Department of Health. “About 1,000 to 1,200 cases of meningococcal disease occur in the United States each year. Although the disease is rare, it is extremely serious. Ten to 15 percent of people who have the disease die. College students age 21 and younger, living in dormitories or other campus housing, are at an increased risk for meningococcal disease, which is why it is so important that they are vaccinated.”

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The new meningococcal vaccine requirement is in addition to the previous requirement for all college students to have two doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Students and/or their parents are urged to contact their health-care provider, pharmacist or local public health unit to determine whether or not the student is up-to-date on immunizations.

A fact sheet with information about meningococcal disease is available at <http://www.ndhealth.gov/Disease/Documents/faqs/Meningococcal.pdf>.

For more information about meningococcal disease and immunization requirements, contact Molly Sander, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4556. For information about the new immunization requirements, contact John Irby, North Dakota University System, at 701.328.2962 or 701.220.1771.

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