

Dear New Student and Parent:

As the Director of Student Health Services at West Liberty University, I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis, and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Bacterial meningitis is rare. However, when it strikes, its flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult. If not treated early, meningitis can lead to swelling of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal column as well as severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, limb amputation and even death.

Three quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate (MenACWY) vaccines and two serogroup B meningococcal (MenB) vaccines are licensed and available in the United States and are recommended by CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for the prevention of meningococcal disease caused by these serogroups.

ACIP recommends routine administration of a MenACWY vaccine for all persons aged 11–18 years. In addition, the ACIP recommends a MenB vaccine series for persons aged 16–23 years based on shared clinical decision-making to provide short-term protection against most strains of serogroup B meningococcal disease. The preferred age for MenB vaccination is 16–18 years. Considerations include the increased risk among college students, especially those who are freshmen, attend a 4-year university, live in on-campus housing, or participate in sororities and fraternities. ([MMWR - Meningococcal Vaccination: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, United States, 2020 \(cdc.gov\)](#))

Incidence of meningococcal disease has decreased since the 1990's and remains low today likely due to vaccination efforts; however, in 2020, there were about 240 total cases of meningococcal disease reported. Among adolescents and young adults, those 16 through 23 years old have the highest rates of meningococcal disease. Of these young adults, many are college students living in residence halls on college campuses. ([Meningococcal Disease Surveillance | CDC](#))

The MenACWY vaccine is available here at the Student Health Service. The MenB vaccine can be received at your physician's office or local pharmacy. Most insurance companies are covering the cost of the vaccinations when given at a physician's office or pharmacy. The WLU Student Health Service does not bill insurance.

- [Meningitis Vaccine \(Menactra®-A/C/Y/W\)](#) consists of a one-time dose. At the West Liberty University Student Health Service the fee is **\$150.00**.

For students wishing to receive the vaccine at the Student Health Service, a [Meningitis Pre-Payment Form](#) can be found on the Health Service website under the *forms tab* at www.westliberty.edu/health-services/. This form is to be completed and mailed with payment to the address listed on the form. If your son or daughter is under the age of 18, a [Meningitis under 18 Consent](#) form must be completed in addition to the pre-payment form. Due to the cost and availability of the vaccine, we must ask for payment in advance so that we may order the vaccine for you. The vaccine will be ordered when students come to campus. You may pay by check or charge the fee to your student account. **Please do not mail cash.** (Pregnant women, students with acute illness at the time of the vaccine administration, students with an allergic reaction to natural rubber latex or any components of the vaccine should not receive the vaccine.)

Sincerely,
Christy Bennington
Director of Student Health Services