

## **IMPORTANT HEPATITIS B AND MENINGITIS INFORMATION**

The General Assembly of the State of Wisconsin mandates that each public or private postsecondary institution in the state provide information concerning Hepatitis B infection to all students entering the institution for the first time. Those students who will be living in on-campus housing must also be informed about the risk of meningococcal meningitis infection. The required information below includes the risk factors and dangers of each disease as well as information on the availability and effectiveness of the respective vaccines for persons who are at-risk for the diseases. The information concerning these diseases is from the Centers for Disease Control and the American College Health Association.

**The law does not require that students receive vaccination for enrollment. Furthermore, the institution is not required by law to provide vaccination and/or reimbursement for the vaccine.**

### **Hepatitis B (HBV) Immunization**

Hepatitis B (HBV) is a serious viral infection of the liver that can lead to chronic liver disease, cirrhosis, liver cancer, liver failure, and even death. The disease is transmitted by blood and or body fluids and many people will have no symptoms when they develop the disease. The primary risk factors for Hepatitis B are sexual activity and injecting drug use. This disease is completely preventable. Hepatitis B vaccine is available to all age groups to prevent Hepatitis B viral infection through your doctor, medical clinics, pharmacies or health departments. A series of three (3) doses of vaccine are required for optimal protection. Missed doses may still be sought to complete the series if only one or two have been acquired. The HBV vaccine has a record of safety and is believed to confer lifelong immunity in most cases. After three doses of the HBV vaccine, more than 90% of healthy adults and 95% of health infant and children develop adequate antibody responses.

### **Meningococcal Meningitis**

Meningococcal disease is a rare but potentially fatal bacterial infection, expressed as either meningitis (infection of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord) or meningococcemia (bacteria in the blood). It should be emphasized that meningitis is rare, occurring at a rate of approximately 1 in 100,000 persons in the United States, and is responsible for about 300 deaths annually. Disease occurrence is unpredictable and we cannot reliably identify who may be at risk. The disease is spread by airborne transmission, primarily by coughing. The disease can onset very quickly and without warning. The early symptoms usually associated with the disease include fever, severe headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea, vomiting, and lethargy. Rapid intervention and treatment is required to avoid serious illness and or death.

There are 5 different subtypes (called serogroups) of the bacterium that causes Meningococcal Meningitis. The current CDC recommended vaccine does not stimulate protective antibodies to Serogroups B, but it does protect against the most common strains of the disease, including sero- groups A, C, Y and W-135. The MCV4, MPSV4 and MenB vaccinations are about 85-90% effective at preventing the meningococcal disease. The serogroup B vaccination is now available and usually covered by insurance. Many recent outbreaks have involved this strain. Vaccines may be available at your family practice office, pharmacies, community clinics and health departments. The vaccines are very safe and adverse reactions are mild and infrequent, consisting primarily of redness and pain at the site of injection lasting up to two days.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that college freshmen (particularly those who live in dormitories or residence halls) be informed about meningococcal disease and the benefits of vaccination and those students who wish to reduce their risk for meningococcal disease be immunized. Other undergraduate students who wish to reduce their risk for meningococcal disease may also choose to be vaccinated.

**For more information about Meningococcal Meningitis and Hepatitis B disease and vaccine, please contact your local health care provider or consult the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Web Site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).**