

BACTERIAL MENINGITIS (OCT.1, 2013)

PURPOSE

To inform students of the state requirements regarding the meningitis vaccine registered student organization (RSO).

SCOPE

This policy is a University policy that applies to all students. The Dean of Students will be responsible for the oversight of this policy.

POLICY

Texas Senate Bill (SB 62) was passed and provides an update to the Bacterial Meningitis Vaccine Mandate. Effective October 1st, 2013 SB 62 requires all students (under age 23) entering an institution of higher education (public and private) to either receive a vaccination against bacterial meningitis or meet certain criteria for declining such a vaccination before the first day of the semester.

Important Information About Meningitis:

Students are REQUIRED to obtain the bacterial meningitis vaccination at least 10 days before moving onto campus, starting classes or beginning other activities (ex; athletics). Proof of vaccination should be submitted 15 days prior to the start of the semester to allow for proper processing.

If you have any questions, please contact the Health Clinic at (830)792-7279. Forms may be emailed to health@schreiner.edu, faxed to (830)792-0721, or mailed to 2100 Memorial Blvd. CMB 6250 Kerrville, TX 78028.

Bacterial Meningitis is a serious, potentially deadly disease that can progress extremely fast. It is an inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. The bacteria that causes meningitis can also infect the blood. This disease strikes about 3,000 Americans each year, including 100-125 on college campuses, leading to 5-15 deaths among college students every year. There is a treatment, but those who survive may develop severe health problems or disabilities.

What are the symptoms?

High fever, rash or purple patches on skin, light sensitivity, confusion or sleepiness, lethargy, severe headache, vomiting, stiff neck, nausea, seizures. There may be a rash of tiny red-purple spots caused by bleeding under the skin. These can occur anywhere on the body. The more symptoms, the higher the risk, so when these symptoms appear seek immediate medical attention.

How is Bacterial Meningitis diagnosed?

Diagnosis is made by a medical provider and is usually based on a combination on clinical symptoms and laboratory results from spinal fluid and blood tests. Early diagnosis and treatment can greatly improve the likelihood of recovery.

How is the disease transmitted?

The disease is transmitted when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, or by sharing drinking container, utensils, cigarettes, toothbrushes, etc.), or come in contact with respiratory or throat secretions.

How do you increase your risk of getting bacterial meningitis?

Exposure to saliva by sharing cigarettes, water bottles, eating utensils, food, kissing, etc.. Living in close conditions (such as sharing a room/suite in a dorm or group home).

What are the possible consequences of the disease?

Death (in 8-24 hours from perfectly well to dead), permanent brain damage, kidney failure, learning disability, hearing loss, blindness, limb damage that requires amputation, coma, convulsions.

Can the disease be treated?

Antibiotic treatment, if received early, can save lives and chances of recovery are increased. However, permanent disability or death can still occur. Vaccination is required for all new and transfer residential students at Schreiner University at least 10 days prior to moving on campus, starting classes, or beginning other activities. Vaccines are required for all new or transfer students under the age of 23 years old. Vaccinations are effective against 4 of the 5 most common bacterial types that cause 70% of the disease in the U.S. Vaccinations take 7-10 days to become effective, with protection lasting 5 years. The cost of the vaccine varies so check with your health care provider. Vaccination is very safe-most common side effects are redness and minor pain at injection site for up to two days.

How can I find out more information?

Contact your own health care provider

Contact your local or regional Texas Department of Health office at 830-896-5515.

Contact web sites: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo; www.acha.org

Administrative Oversight: Dean of Students

Responsible for Implementation: Dean of Students