



Meningitis B | Beware of B Fact Sheet

What is meningococcal disease?

- Meningitis is bacterial or viral disease that results in the inflammation of the protective membranes that cover the brain and spinal cord. Symptoms include headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, increased sensitivity to light and confusion and can develop within three to seven days after exposure to the disease.¹
- In the United States, approximately 1,000 people contract meningococcal disease every year. While meningococcal diseases are relatively rare, 10 to 15 percent of those who contract the disease will die. Another nearly 20 percent will suffer from loss of limbs and/or other serious impacts to the nervous system, according for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- The bacteria that causes meningitis spreads through the exchange of respiratory secretions and saliva during close or lengthy personal contact. Students and young adults are among the most likely to contract the disease, especially in settings like college dorms where students are living in close proximity to each other. Since the spring of 2013, meningitis B outbreaks have occurred on five major college campuses in the U.S.

So, what is meningitis B?

- There are at least 12 types, or “serogroups,” of meningococcal diseases. One is serogroup B – a strain that accounts for 50 percent of all cases in the U.S.
- The most commonly recommended meningitis vaccine protects against four major serogroups (A, C, W, and Y) and is recommended for all individuals by age 11 or 12, with a booster at age 16. However, this vaccine does not protect against one of the most common disease strains: serogroup B.

The meningitis B Vaccine(s):

- In 2014, the Food and Drug Administration licensed a vaccine to protect against meningitis B, but very few people have received it. The CDC recommends the vaccination for anyone ages 16 to 23.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/bacterial.html>



Specifics for Indiana:

- In Indiana, all of the meningitis cases in 2014 were caused by the meningitis B strain and in 2015, 5 of the 6 cases were meningitis B.
- Currently, in Indiana, colleges and universities are only required to inform students of the risk that accompany the meningococcal disease and the benefits of its vaccination. This legal requirement does not mandate schools to educate students on the difference between strains of meningitis or to specifically address the B strain of the disease.

The Beware of B Campaign:

- As college students head back to school, the Indiana Immunization Coalition is partnering with Walgreen's pharmacies across the state to launch 'Beware of B' to inform college students and their parents about the importance of the meningitis B vaccine.
- To learn more, please visit <http://vaccinateindiana.org/beware-of-b/>