



April 2017

Dear UA student:

You may have heard from other students and the media about meningitis and the “meningitis vaccine”. The term meningitis refers to an infection of the outer surface of the brain. Meningitis can be caused by a number of different bacteria and viruses. The news you’ve heard about outbreaks of meningitis on a few college campuses is specifically dealing with a type of bacterial meningitis known as meningococcal meningitis.

This type of meningitis is not very common, but has become important on college campuses because studies have shown that it may occur a little more often among college students who live in residence halls or similar kinds of living arrangements (e.g. a fraternity or sorority house). Meningococcal meningitis is also important to know about because it can be fatal in a minority of cases, and because there are vaccines that can prevent cases of this kind of meningitis.

We are sending you this letter so that you can make an informed decision about whether to get the meningococcal vaccine. The UA is not requiring that you get the vaccine against meningococcal meningitis, but **strongly recommending** that any student who will be living in university (residence halls) or Greek system (fraternity or sorority) housing seriously consider being vaccinated against meningococcal meningitis.

We’ve provided more detailed information regarding meningococcal meningitis and the vaccines on our website at: <https://www.health.arizona.edu/meningitis-faqs>. Please take a few minutes to review this information. You may want to discuss it with your parents and physician before deciding whether you should get these vaccines.

If you haven’t received the meningitis vaccines and you decide you’d like to receive those vaccines, you can be vaccinated by your private physician, or by the Campus Health Service once you’ve started your first semester at the UA. If you would like to be vaccinated at the Campus Health Service, please call 520-621-2292 to schedule an appointment for the vaccination. There is a charge for these vaccines.

If you, your parents or your physician should have any questions, please feel free to call us at (520) 621-2292. We hope you have a healthy and successful college experience.

Sincerely,

Harry McDermott, M.D., M.P.H.
Public Health Officer, The University of Arizona Campus Health Service