



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

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STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

Dear FHSU Student:

This letter is being sent to you to inform you about Meningitis. Meningitis is a disease caused by the inflammation of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord known as meninges. The inflammation is usually caused by an infection of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord. Meningitis may develop in response to a number of causes, usually bacteria or viruses, but Meningitis can also be caused by physical injury, cancer, or certain drugs.

This disease, while not common, can have potentially rapidly fatal outcomes. College students are at increased risk for this disease (1 out of 20,000, rather than 1 out of 100,000 for the population at large) because of living in group housing. Some studies have shown an increased risk of infection with smoking, increased alcohol consumption and bar patronage.

Early symptoms associated with these diseases include fever, severe headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea, vomiting and lethargy and often resemble the flu. Because the disease progresses rapidly, often in as little as 12 hours, students are urged to seek medical care immediately, especially if you experience two or more symptoms at the same time. Of those who contract the infection and are treated, 10-15% will die and 11% to 19% will be left with a significant infection such as mental retardation, limb loss or hearing loss.

A safe vaccine is available to you which may prevent up to 85% of the known stereotypes of meningitis. Protection is expected to be long lasting, but the exact duration of protection is not yet known. Side effects of the vaccine are usually mild and consist of redness and swelling at the injection site and/or muscle aches.

Fort Hays State University requires all students living in University Housing or Greek Housing receive this vaccination or sign a waiver indicating that you are aware of the risks of Meningitis and feel informed in your decision to not be vaccinated. This requirement must be met prior to being allowed to move into campus housing. All students who have been vaccinated must provide documentation of immunization. These documents will become part of your permanent health record which will be kept at the Student Health Center. We do provide the vaccine at the Student Health Center. You may also receive your vaccine through your personal medical provider. Please have them give you documentation that you have received the vaccine, so you can provide us the proof that is needed.

Sincerely,
Student Health Center

TMS 07/13/12