

Meningococcal Disease Prevention and Awareness

With all public health concerns on or off campus, Student Health Services (SHS) makes every effort to use prevention and education strategies to keep our campus healthy. The following are ways in which faculty, staff, and students can reduce the risk of infection from common colds, influenza, mononucleosis and meningitis:

Do NOT share anything that comes in contact with the mouth, including:

- water bottles
- lip balm
- toothbrushes
- towels
- drinking glasses including drinking straws
- eating utensils
- cosmetics
- mouth guards
- face masks
- smoking materials
- food or drink from a common source (e.g., punch bowl)

Do not cough into another person's face. Cough into your sleeve or a tissue. Wash or sanitize hands frequently. Make sure your vaccinations are up to date.

Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick or spreading germs to others. If you are concerned about creating antibiotic resistant bacteria, use regular soap rather than antibacterial soap. There is no evidence that antibacterial soap is more beneficial than plain soap. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. The active ingredient in these hand sanitizers is usually alcohol, not an antibiotic.

Meningitis is not as contagious as other viruses such as the flu but is a serious medical condition that warrants immediate treatment. It is spread by exchanging respiratory and throat secretions such as coughing, kissing, or lengthy, close contact. Participating in activities, classes or using common eating facilities is not a risk factor for infection.

The early symptoms of meningitis mimic many other illnesses, especially influenza. If any flu-like symptoms progress to those listed below, you should obtain prompt medical care.

The signs and symptoms of meningitis include:

- A high fever of 101.5 or above
- Severe headache
- Stiff neck
- Visual sensitivity to light
- Difficulty concentrating
- Confusion
- Decreased or no appetite

Students experiencing any of these symptoms should contact the SHS at 973-596-3621, or their local health care provider. Faculty and staff are encouraged to seek care at their own health care provider or a local emergency room.

More information is available at

http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/meningo/documents/meningococcal_faq.pdf

Please take the time to update your immunization status. For more information go to:

<http://www.njit.edu/healthservices/wellness/index.php>