

Students are strongly encouraged to visit with their primary care physician or area health clinic as soon as possible to receive the appropriate vaccinations.

For more information please contact the Student Health Services Office at 956.364.4305.



For more information:

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html.

Cameron County Department of Health & Human Services offers meningitis vaccines for \$13 at its Harlingen office located at 711 North L Street. You can call to check availability of this or other vaccines at 956.423.3516.

TSTC Harlingen offers meningitis vaccines for \$13 at its regularly scheduled immunization clinics. Contact Student Health Services for more information and clinic dates.



Admissions Office

1902 N. Loop 499 • Harlingen, TX 78550
956.364.4001 | www.harlingen.tstc.edu

Bacterial Meningitis Vaccination

NEW LAW EFFECTIVE
JANUARY 1, 2012



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Bacterial Meningitis Vaccination

is required for all new students under age 30. This includes transfer students and students that have taken either a fall or spring semester off from college.

The state of Texas passed a new law (SB 1107) effective Spring Semester 2012 that will require all new students under age 30 to have a vaccination against bacterial meningitis. All first-time freshmen, transfer students and students who have taken a leave of absence from school in either a fall or spring semester must have received this vaccination during the five-year period immediately preceding and at least 10 days prior to the first day of the semester enrolled or re-enrolled. One of the following sources of documentation must be provided to the Admissions Office as an admissions requirement:

1. Certification from a physician or clinic that the student has been vaccinated during the five-year period immediately preceding and at least 10 days prior to the first day of class.
2. An affidavit or a certificate from a physician stating that the vaccination would be injurious to the health and well-being of the student.
3. Exemption form from Texas Department of State Health Services approving exception for reasons of conscience.

The approved form for exemption can be found at: <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm>.

What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord - also called the meninges. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria.

What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms, but any of the following are possible. Symptoms include:

- Severe headache
- Sensitivity to bright lights
- High temperature
- Neck stiffness, joint pains
- Vomiting
- Drowsiness or confusion

**In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots or bruises caused by bleeding under the skin. These can occur anywhere on the body. They are a sign of blood poisoning (septicemia), which sometimes happens with meningitis, particularly the meningococcal strain.*

The more symptoms, the higher the risk, so when these symptoms appear seek immediate medical attention. Diagnosis is made by a medical provider and is usually based on a combination of clinical symptoms and laboratory results from spinal fluid and blood tests. Early diagnosis and treatment can greatly improve the likelihood of recovery.

What is the risk of getting bacterial meningitis?

The risk of getting bacterial meningitis in all age groups is about 2.4 cases per 100,000 population per year. The disease affects about 3,000 Americans each year, including 100 to 125 in colleges and universities, leading to five to 15 deaths every year.

How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of people you kiss. Exposure to saliva by sharing cigarettes, water bottles, eating utensils, food, kissing, etc., as well as living in close conditions (such as sharing a room/suite in a dorm) increases the risk of getting bacterial meningitis.

Antibiotic treatment, if received early, can save lives and chances of recovery are increased; however, permanent disability or death can still occur. Possible consequences include death, permanent brain damage, kidney failure, learning disability, hearing loss, disability, limb damage that requires amputation, gangrene, coma, or convulsions.

A safe and effective vaccine against meningitis is available (85-90%). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within 7 to 10 days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to 5 years.

