Meningococcal Meningitis

HEALTH ALERT

What is Meningococcal Meningitis?
Meningococcal meningitis is a contagious bacterial infection of the membranes that cover the brain and spinal cord. Students living in residence halls and other close quarters may be at higher risk of contracting this infection. Outbreaks have been reported at UC Santa Barbara, UC Riverside, Cal State Long Beach, and Princeton University.

While no cases have been reported within the UCI campus community, we want to alert you to its presence in Southern California to raise awareness so you can take these simple steps to reduce your risk.

What are the symptoms?
Meningococcal meningitis is very serious and even fatal if not treated with antibiotics immediately.

Symptoms include sudden onset of:
- Fever
- Severe headache
- Severe stiff neck

Often accompanied by:
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Photophobia (increased light sensitivity)
- Altered mental status (confusion)
- Unusual rash

How is it transmitted?
It’s spread by exchanging respiratory/throat secretions like saliva during close contact such as:
- kissing
- coughing
- sharing drinks, straws, utensils
- living in close quarters

Treatment:
If you are displaying symptoms, or have come into contact with someone confirmed to have this disease, immediately contact the Student Health Center or go to the nearest Emergency Center.

Prevention:
- Meningitis immunization provides protection from some strains of this infection.
- Antibiotics can be used as preventive treatment after possible exposures to infected individuals.

Students: Check past medical records and contact Student Health Center if you did not receive your last dose when you were 16 or older.

Staff: This disease rarely affects older adults, and at this time no immunizations are recommended for non-students.

For more information:
UCI EH&S: Phone # (949) 824-6200
Student Health Center: Phone# (949) 824-5302.
http://www.shs.uci.edu/Main/NewsandEvents-StudentHealthCenter-UCI.aspx#a26
Center for Disease Control (CDC):
http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html
Orange County Health Department:

Avoid the following:
- Sharing drinks, straws or utensils
- Drinking/eating from a common source (such as a punch bowl)
- Sharing cigarettes, cigars, pipes and other smoking devices

Practice Healthy Hygiene:
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly
- Cough into your sleeve or a tissue