

## Early Symptoms of Meningitis

(Similar to flu symptoms)

- ⇒ High fever      ⇒ Rash
- ⇒ Severe headache   ⇒ Nausea
- ⇒ Light sensitivity   ⇒ Vomiting
- ⇒ Neck stiffness      ⇒ Lethargy

## Is Vaccination Recommended for University Students?

Health Canada currently recommends immunization for children 1- 4 years old and for adolescents and young adults.

A number of advisory groups including the Ontario College Health Association, have adopted the recommendation that first year university students who live in residence should be educated about meningitis and the potential benefits of vaccination.

The vaccination is available by obtaining a prescription from a physician at Health and Counselling Services on campus. The cost is 80% covered by your student drug plan.

## CU Healthy

**HCS** wants to CU Healthy! The Health Promotion Team at HCS tries to achieve this through our:

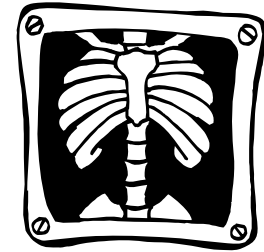
- Resource Centre
- Student Peer Interns
- Health Promotion Advisory Committee
- Website ([carleton.ca/health](http://carleton.ca/health))
- Facebook page
- Newsletters, class presentations, workshops and more . . .

The Health Promotion Team promotes healthy lifestyles and wellness and can provide you with information about stress, colds, nutrition, sexuality, alcohol, etc. Contact the Resource Centre for more information at 613-520-2600 ext. 6544 or [cu\\_healthy@carleton.ca](mailto:cu_healthy@carleton.ca).



2600 CTTC Building  
613-520-6674  
[carleton.ca/health](http://carleton.ca/health)

# Meningitis



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## What Is Meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the membranes (meninges) and cerebrospinal fluid surrounding your brain and spinal cord, usually due to the spread of infection. The cause of most cases of meningitis is a viral infection, but bacterial and fungal infections can also lead to meningitis. The severity of the inflammation and the best treatment depend on the cause of the infection.

- 10% of the population carries meningococcal bacteria at the back of the throat or nose without any effects.
- In rare instances, the bacteria overcomes the body's natural defenses and causes serious disease.
- It can occur in two forms— as either meningococcal meningitis, an inflammation that affects the brain and spinal cord, or as meningococemia, the presence of bacteria in the blood.
- The infection is treated with antibiotics.

## What Causes Bacterial Meningitis?

This infectious disease is caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitis*, a leading cause of bacterial meningitis in older children and young adults.

This is generally much more serious than viral meningitis, and timely treatment is necessary.

Bacterial meningitis can be fatal if left untreated.

## How is Viral and Bacterial Meningitis Transmitted?

- Infection is spread through a transfer of secretions from the throat or nose *during close contact*.
- Kissing, sharing eating utensils, drinking glasses, water bottles, cigarettes, lip gloss, etc.
- The infection is **NOT** acquired by simply being in the same room as an infected person or breathing air where an infected person has been.

## Who is at Risk for Meningitis?

- Meningococcal disease occurs worldwide. Infection is most common in the winter and spring months. Although the disease can occur at any age, the highest risk for meningococcal disease is among children under one year of age with the next highest risk among teenagers 15-19 years of age.
- Travellers in certain highly endemic countries (such as part of sub-Saharan Africa) are also at increased risk for meningococcal disease. As well, people with certain immune deficiencies, and household or institutional contacts of infected individuals are at increased risk.
- Certain social and behavioural activities of teenagers and young adults may increase their risk (i.e. see “How is Meningitis Transmitted?”).

# Meningitis: Know Your Risk