

***NORTH PROVIDENCE PRIMARY CARE ASSOC. INC.
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INTERNAL MEDICINE***

***Back To School
Means pads, pencils, books, and
MENINGITIS VACCINE????***

Neisseria meningitides is a bacteria which lives in the nasal passages and throats of 15% of the general population. It is not known what caused this bacteria to become known virulent and inflict the disease of meningitis. Neisseria m. affects 1/100,000 people in the United States per year with a peak incidence among children less than 2 years of age and adolescents between the ages of 15 through 25. There has been an increase incidence of Neisseria meningitis among university students in their first semester living in a dormitory setting. The key symptoms of meningitis include: fever, headache, nausea and vomiting, avoidance of bright light, stiff neck, a diffuse skin rash which involves bleeding under the skin and an altered sense of consciousness. It should be known that not all meningitis is caused by Neisseria m; there are other bacterial and viral causes of meningitis.

There are different serotypes of Neisseria meningitides which include types A, B, C, X, Y, Z,29-E, and W-135. All serotypes can cause meningitis and blood infection called septicemia. There is a higher epidemic spread of serotypes A and C; however, all are equally virulent. There is currently a vaccine available against four of the serotypes (A, C, Y, W-135). This vaccine does afford the individual with limited protection against the above serotypes for a period of 3-5 years and are now being offered routinely by your primary care doctor to adolescents embarking to college or military camp.

So remember, a trip to your doctor's office should precede a trip to the campus bookstore.

Written by Anthony G. Farina Jr.

