



St. Mary's County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MENINGITIS VACCINE AVAILABLE AT COLLEGE FAIR

Vaccine is a requirement for all Maryland college students living on campus

LEONARDTOWN, MD (August 12, 2006) -- St. Mary's County Health Department is offering meningococcal disease information and vaccinations at the Southern Maryland College Fair on Tuesday, Sept. 19, at the Hollywood Fire Department from 5:30 – 8 p.m. Students and parents will find the vaccine clinic at the Health Connections Van parked outside.

Meningococcal vaccination is a requirement for all Maryland college students residing on campus. County Health Officer, William Icenhower, MD, MPH, set a goal of 100 percent vaccine protection against meningococcal disease in St. Mary's County, and strongly recommends that no waivers be signed deferring meningococcal vaccination. Although rare, invasive meningococcal disease and meningitis are bacterial infections that progress rapidly and may cause sudden death or severe debilitation, such as

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multiple amputations, deafness, and brain damage.

Getting vaccinated is widely seen as a first step of getting prepared for college.

According to the health department there is a shortage of meningococcal vaccine this year due to broad public acceptance and the expansion of recommendations for it to be given routinely to high school freshmen and children 11-12 years of age. Despite the demand, the health department has an adequate supply of Menactra meningococcal vaccine for our county students.

Health officials note that the vaccine is safe and effective, causing mild side effects of redness or pain at the injection site for 1-2 days in about half of the recipients. The cost of the vaccine is \$87. Payment may be made by checks payable to St. Mary's County Health Department. Students under age 18, must have a parent present to sign consent for the vaccination. For more information call the health department at 301-475-4330.

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