



Philadelphia Department of Public Health  
**Division of Disease Control**

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***Health Advisory***  
**Cluster of Meningococcal Infections among College  
Students Attending Fraternity Parties**  
**February 13, 2009**

Three cases of meningococcal infection have been recognized among college students attending a university fraternity rush party held over the weekend of February 6-8, 2009. One of the cases has been confirmed with *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup B. The University and the Health Department are working to identify close contacts of the cases and distribute post-exposure prophylaxis, as indicated.

Meningococcal infection usually results in bacteremia or meningitis. The symptoms of meningococcal meningitis are the same as those caused by other types of bacterial meningitis: sudden onset of fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, and light sensitivity (photophobia). There may be a petechial or purpuric rash. Meningococcal infections are caused by the Gram-negative diplococcus, *Neisseria meningitidis*. Meningococcal infections are serious and potentially fatal. On average the incubation period is 4 days, with a range from 1-14 days.

**Recommendations**

- Be alert to the signs and symptoms of meningococcal infection, especially among individuals who report exposure to college fraternity parties.
- For individuals who report exposure to meningococcal infection or who report attending university fraternity parties where a case occurred, post-exposure prophylaxis is indicated. For persons, 18 years of age or older, options include:

Ciprofloxacin, 500 mg orally in a single dose

or

Rifampin, 600 mg orally every 12 hours for 2 days

- Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV-4) is recommended as a *routine* immunization for all children at the pre-adolescent visit (11-12 years of age); adolescents who have not previously received MCV4; college freshman who will be living in a dormitory; and persons 2-55 years of age at increased risk for meningococcal disease (i.e., persons with anatomic or functional asplenia, persons with terminal complement deficiencies, etc).
- Report all cases of confirmed or suspect meningococcal infection to the Division of Disease Control at 215-685-6748 during normal business hours, or to 215-686-1776 after hours.

*For questions or concerns, please contact the Division of Disease Control, Philadelphia Department of Public Health at 215-685-6748. After business hours, the Health Department can be paged at 215-686-1776.*