



# IMPORTANT

## Living on campus next semester?

### To get your keys, you'll need to get a meningitis vaccine.

New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevy recently signed a law that will require students who reside in campus housing to be immunized against meningitis as of September 2004.

#### YOU CAN'T BELIEVE THEY MADE THIS A LAW? WELL, CONSIDER THIS...

- This disease strikes about 3,000 Americans each year leading to approximately 300 deaths annually.
- Of those who survive, an additional 10% have severe aftereffects of the disease, including mental retardation, hearing loss and loss of limbs.
- Freshmen living in residence halls have six times the risk of contracting meningitis.
- Cases among teenagers and young adults have more than doubled since 1991.
- Between 100 and 125 cases occur on college campuses across the United States every year.

#### About meningitis

Bacterial meningitis affects the spinal cord and brain. If left untreated, it can cause permanent brain damage, hearing loss, learning disability, limb amputation, kidney failure or even death.

#### How do you get meningitis?

Bacterial meningitis can be contracted through behaviors associated with normal college life, such as intimate contact and sharing drinking glasses, utensils and cigarettes. Crowded resident halls increase the chance of direct contact with someone who is already infected.

#### Am I at risk for contracting meningitis?

Although meningitis can strike anyone, you are at a higher risk if you . . .

- reside in campus housing
- have direct contact with an infected person
- have an upper respiratory infection and/or impaired immune system
- travel to areas of the world where meningitis is an epidemic

#### How do I protect myself?

Studies have shown that most cases of bacterial meningitis are **vaccine preventable**. Currently, the vaccine available is 85% to 100% effective in preventing many of the bacteria that cause meningitis. Side effects, such as redness and soreness at the injection site, are mild and infrequent lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within 7 to 10 days after vaccination and lasts from 3 to 5 years. Although the vaccine may not be 100% effective, it is your best protection against the disease.

#### Why get the vaccine now?

There could be shortages of the vaccine by September. Getting immunized now could prevent unnecessary stress in the fall since thousands of NJ college students will be scrambling to get their vaccine by September.

#### Not sure if you have had the vaccine?

You can call Health Services at 652-4701 or stop by West Quad, Room WQ-108, to check if we have proof of the vaccination on file.

#### To learn more about meningitis and prevention contact:

- Your family physician
- Health Services, WQ-108, 652-4701
- Visit the following related Web sites:
  - The Centers for Disease Control: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
  - American College Health Association: [www.acha.org](http://www.acha.org)

After you receive the vaccine, please forward a copy of the proof of immunization to the Health Services Office in West Quad, Room WQ-108.

