**Advice from Public Health England**

**How many meningitis cases are there at the University of Surrey?**

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**What is meningococcal disease?**

Meningococcal disease is a rare but serious bacterial infection caused by meningococcal bacteria. People with meningococcal disease can develop meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain), septicaemia (blood poisoning) or both. Healthy young children, teenagers and young adults have a higher risk of meningococcal disease compared to the rest of the population. Meningococcal bacteria belonging to group B (MenB) are responsible for most meningococcal infections in the UK and across Europe

**How contagious is meningococcal disease?**

Meningococcal bacteria are carried in the back of the throat of about one in ten people at any one time, but only very rarely cause illness. Most people who carry the bacteria become immune to them. The bacteria do not spread easily unless there is prolonged, close contact with a carrier of the bacteria.

**What health advice has been provided to students at the University of Surrey and the students?**

The University of Surrey has been working with Public Health England to provide advice on meningococcal disease, the signs and symptoms to watch out for, and what steps to take if they become unwell. All close contacts of the cases have been identified and given antibiotics. **People who have not had prolonged, close contact with the cases are NOT at any greater risk than the rest of the university population and do not need antibiotics.**

**What action is the University of Surrey and Public Health England taking?**

Public Health England (PHE) is arranging MenB vaccination for all full-time undergraduate students who live in halls of residence at the University of Surrey. Vaccination is being recommended to protect against the MenB strain responsible for at least two of the cases.

**Why are you vaccinating all full- time undergraduate students who reside in halls of residence at the University of Surrey?**

The evidence shows that the highest risk of meningococcal disease is to full-time undergraduate students who live in halls of residence.

**Is it compulsory for the students to have the vaccination?**

Vaccination is the best way of protecting students against meningitis and septicaemia caused by the circulating MenB strain; therefore it is strongly recommended.

**Won’t the teenage meningococcal vaccine protect students?**

There is a national outbreak of group W meningococcal disease (MenW) in the UK, which led to the introduction of the teenage MenACWY vaccination programme in 2015. This vaccine will protect against group A, C, W and Y bacteria but not against MenB, which was responsible for at least two of the cases at the University of Surrey

**How will students receive the vaccination?**

Arrangements are being made for students to receive the vaccination on the university campus. MenB vaccination consists of two doses given at least 4 weeks apart (both doses are required to provide protection). The university is sending details to the targeted group and further information is available on the university website at …….

**If I receive the MenB vaccine, does this mean I will never get meningococcal disease?**

The vaccine does not protect against all meningococcal bacteria and no vaccine is 100% effective; other bacteria can also cause meningitis and septicaemia, so students should still be aware of the signs and symptoms.

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| **What are the symptoms of meningococcal disease?** **Meningitis**  | **Septicaemia**  |
| Fever  | Fever  |
| Vomiting  | Vomiting  |
| Severe headache  | Bruising / rash  |
| Stiff neck  | Rapid breathing  |
| Dislike of bright light  | Joint / muscle pain  |
| Seizures  | Cold hands and feet  |
| Confusion / irritability  | Confusion / irritability  |
| Extreme sleepiness / difficulty waking  | Extreme sleepiness / difficulty waking  |