



Meningitis is an infection of the fluid and lining around the brain and spinal cord and can lead to brain damage, hearing loss, learning disabilities, and even death. Septicemia is a bloodstream infection, which can lead to loss of an arm or leg and even death. Even if they get treatment, about 1 in 10 people with meningococcal disease will die from it.

The meningococcal vaccine is the best way to protect teens from getting meningococcal disease. This is really important if they are about to move into a college residence hall as a first-year student or go into the military. Living in community settings like those can increase the risk of getting meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal vaccine has been studied very carefully and is safe and effective. It is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine.

Because of the increased risk to young adults, Texas has enacted laws regarding vaccination prior to entering an institution of higher education. All entering students are required to show evidence of an initial bacterial meningitis vaccine or a booster dose during the five-year period preceding enrollment at an institution. An exception to the requirement exists if a student submits an affidavit signed by the student stating that the student declines the vaccination for reasons of conscience.

There has been a trend by some in recent years to use the exemption affidavit for the purpose of convenience or cost savings. This trend has the potential to increase the risk of disease not only for the individual but also for everyone around them. When deciding whether to get vaccinated, it is important to consider the risks of not doing so, such as enormous hospital bills, permanent neurological and physical disability or even death.

United, Market Street and Amigos pharmacies offer a full line of both adolescent and adult vaccinations. Be prepared for college and stay healthy, visit the pharmacy the next time you need a vaccine.