



Lafene Health Center
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<http://www.ksu.edu/lafene/>

Dear K-State Student:

This sheet is being distributed to provide you with information regarding two very serious diseases – meningitis and a blood infection called meningococemia, both caused by the bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis*. These diseases have affected college students in the state of Kansas. Both can be rapidly fatal. The risk of these very serious diseases is now known to be several times greater for freshmen college students who live in residence halls (1 out of 20,000) than the risk for students who live elsewhere (1 out of 100,000). The risk of these diseases in the students who live in fraternities and sororities is unknown, but it may also be elevated. Some studies have shown an increased risk of infection with smoking, increased alcohol consumption and bar patronage.

The early symptoms usually associated with the above diseases include fever, severe headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea, vomiting, and lethargy, and may resemble the flu. Because the disease progresses rapidly, often in as little as 12 hours, students are urged to seek medical care immediately if they experience two or more of these symptoms concurrently. *10% to 15%* of persons contracting these diseases die and *20%* will be left with a significant disability (such as mental retardation, hearing loss, or loss of limbs) from the infection.

There is a safe vaccine that is highly effective in preventing most forms of this disease. Protection is expected to be long lasting, more than 5 years. Side effects of the vaccine are usually mild. Kansas Board of Regents policy, effective starting the fall semester of 2006, requires all incoming students residing in university housing at a Regent's institution be vaccinated for this disease or sign a waiver declining the vaccination. The vaccine is available at Lafene but also may be obtained at other primary care physician offices and health departments.

If you are interested in getting this protection, call your local health provider, county health department, or Lafene Health Center (785-532-6544) to schedule an appointment.

Or if you wish to learn more about these diseases or the vaccine call the department of Health Promotion, Lafene Health Center at 785-532-6595. *Or check the KSU website in the Health and Safety portal, <http://www.ksu.edu/lafene/meningitis.htm>*

Please share this information with your parents or guardian.

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Director

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