August 11, 2015

Communication to Students Regarding Meningococcal Disease and New Vaccine Recommendation

Dear Campus Community,

In the next few days I will be sending an email communication to all new and continuing students to inform them of a recent development related to the outbreak of meningococcal serogroup B ("MenB") disease that occurred at UCSB in November 2013. No new cases have developed among UCSB students since November 2013, but a recent "associated case" developed in a person who likely had close contact with a UCSB student in late spring. Because of this more recent case, we are communicating to students a precautionary recommendation that they should be vaccinated with one of two FDA approved vaccines currently available at Student Health Service or through local health care providers. The full text of the email to students can be found below.

The risk to UCSB faculty, staff, and other campus visitors of contracting MenB is very low as this is a disease that is transmitted person to person by close or lengthy contact through exchange of respiratory and throat secretions. The information below also provides details about greater risk for people with certain specific medical conditions. If you have any questions or concerns about vaccination for yourself, you are encouraged to discuss these with your personal health care providers.

Thank you for your help in providing students with accurate information about this new development, and for referring any questions or concerns to Student Health Service at (805) 893-5339 or by email to MenB.Vaccine@sa.ucsb.edu.

Sincerely,

Mary Ferris, M.D.
Executive Director, Student Health Service
August 11, 2015

IMPORTANT UPDATE AND RECOMMENDATION ABOUT MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE VACCINE FROM UCSB

Dear UCSB Student,

You may be aware that in November 2013 UC Santa Barbara experienced an outbreak of meningococcal serogroup B (“MenB”) disease that resulted in four cases among UCSB students. At that time, a similar outbreak occurred at Princeton University. Though all of the UCSB students recovered, meningococcal disease is a very serious, sometimes fatal, bacterial disease that often attacks young adults and those living in group settings such as residence halls/dorms or Greek houses.

New Development

No cases have developed among UCSB students since November 2013. However, the California State Department of Health and the CDC recently informed us that a new case of MenB developed in a person who likely had close contact with a UC Santa Barbara student on campus in May 2015. This person (who was not and is not a UCSB student) has fully recovered, and as a precautionary measure close contacts were treated with antibiotics. This more recent “associated case” suggests the possibility that meningococcal disease may still be present in the UCSB student population. Studies have found that 25-34% of all young people may have varying serogroups of this bacteria in the back of their nose and throat with no signs or symptoms of the disease; these people are considered “carriers.” Meningococcal disease is spread from person to person by exchange of respiratory and throat secretions (saliva or spit) during close or lengthy contact (for example, sharing water bottles or kissing).

Following the November 2013 outbreak at UCSB, our campus worked closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct a mass immunization effort to protect UCSB students and curtail the spread of this disease. During the course of two vaccination campaigns conducted in early 2014, the campus provided 17,500 immunizations to over 50% of UCSB students using the Bexsero® vaccine that was then licensed only for use in Europe, Australia, and Canada. Since that time, two serogroup B meningococcal vaccines have been licensed and approved for routine use in the United States, and the CDC Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices has recommended that everyone ages 16-23 years old consider immunization after consultation with their healthcare provider.
Recommendation from CDC

As a precaution, and in the interest of the health and safety of our campus community, the CDC recommends immunization with the meningococcal serogroup B vaccine for new and continuing UCSB students who are not already vaccinated. Students vaccinated at UCSB in 2014 with both doses of Bexsero®, or at any time since with full dosage of either Bexsero® or Trumenba®, do not need to be vaccinated again. Vaccination is also highly recommended for any person at increased risk because of complement component deficiencies (e.g., C5-C9, properdin, factor H, factor D, or taking Soliris®) or absence of their spleen. Graduate students are considered to be at lower risk than undergraduates; however, the FDA has approved both vaccines for those up to age 26. In an outbreak situation, the CDC recommends that the vaccine be given with no upper age limit.

What Students Should Consider

New students and continuing students living away from UCSB for the summer should contact their local health care provider before fall quarter to receive the first dose of one of the FDA approved vaccines — 2-dose Bexsero® or 3-dose Trumenba®. Follow-up doses may then be obtained at UCSB’s Student Health Service. With both vaccines it is important to receive the full dosage for maximum protection. Both vaccines are currently available from UCSB’s Student Health Service. Immunization clinics will be scheduled during fall quarter throughout campus and in the residence halls, and Express Vaccine Clinics will be held every Tuesday and Friday in the Student Health building beginning September 25th. The cost of the vaccine is fully covered by Gaucho Health Insurance (GHI). Students who have waived out of GHI can also obtain the vaccine from UCSB Student Health and seek reimbursement from their insurance carrier. Dates and locations of vaccine clinics will be available at studenthealth.sa.ucsb.edu.

Health Tips & Symptoms

To protect themselves, students should avoid sharing water bottles, cups, eating utensils, lipstick, smoking devices, and toothbrushes with others. Students should also be aware of the symptoms of meningococcal meningitis which include sudden onset of fever, severe headache, and stiff neck, often accompanied by nausea, vomiting, rash, increased sensitivity to light, and mental confusion. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention. Student Health has Urgent Care available 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. weekdays, with late opening Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m. Student Health’s 24-hour Nurse Line is also available at 800-539-1387.

We will continue to post updates and additional information on the availability of MenB vaccines at studenthealth.sa.ucsb.edu/home/new-meningitis-b-
vaccine. You may also call Student Health at (805) 893-5339 with questions, or email us MenB.Vaccine@sa.ucsb.edu.

We want to emphasize that although there is no reason to be alarmed, it is prudent to follow the CDC recommendation and to take precautions to avoid any risk to either individuals or our community. Thank you for your cooperation. Please do not hesitate to contact Student Health Service if you have any questions. I hope you have a safe and restful summer, and look forward to seeing you at the start of the 2015-16 academic year.

Very sincerely,

Mary Ferris, M.D.

Executive Director, Student Health Service