

# Meningitis Cases Increasing in Georgia

The Georgia Department of Public Health has confirmed an increase in the number of invasive meningococcal disease infections in the State. Health Services is encouraging all students to review their immunization status and make sure that they are protected from this highly contagious illness.

**College students are at higher risk of meningococcal disease.**

## What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease refers to any illness caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. These illnesses are often severe, can be deadly, and include infections of the lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) and bloodstream.<sup>1</sup>

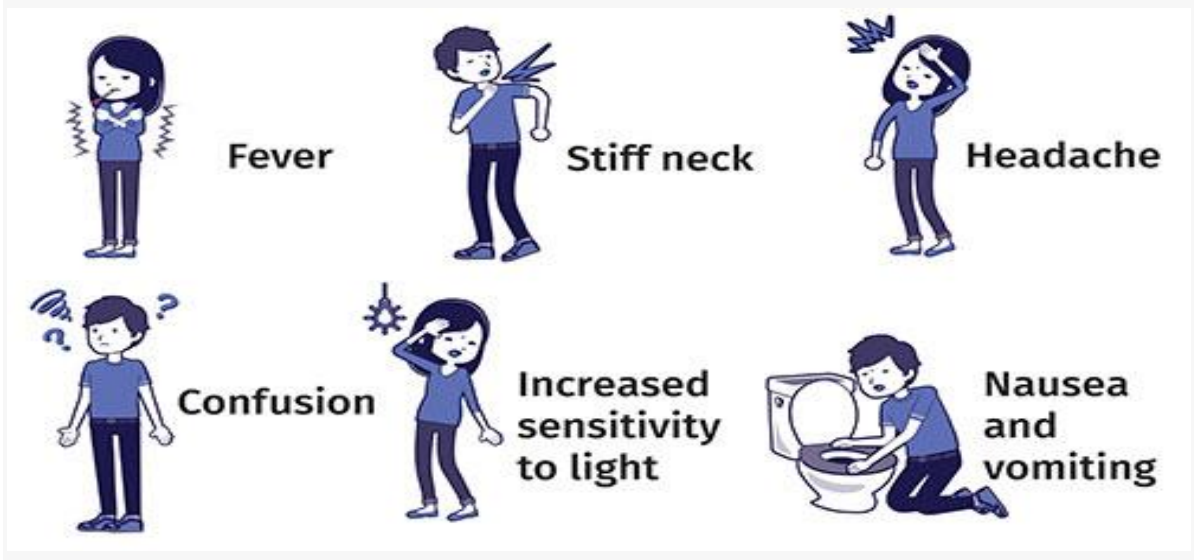
It is easy to spread from person to person. The bacteria can be spread by:



- Sharing anything that comes in contact with **saliva**, like eating utensils, food or drinks;
- Being in **close** quarters with someone;
- Being **sneezed** or cough on; or
- **Kissing**.

## Symptoms

Meningococcal disease can attack without warning and early symptoms can often be mistaken for the flu. Symptoms include high fever, stiff neck, vomiting, headache, exhaustion, and a purplish rash. You should call your doctor immediately if you experience sudden and severe onset of these symptoms.

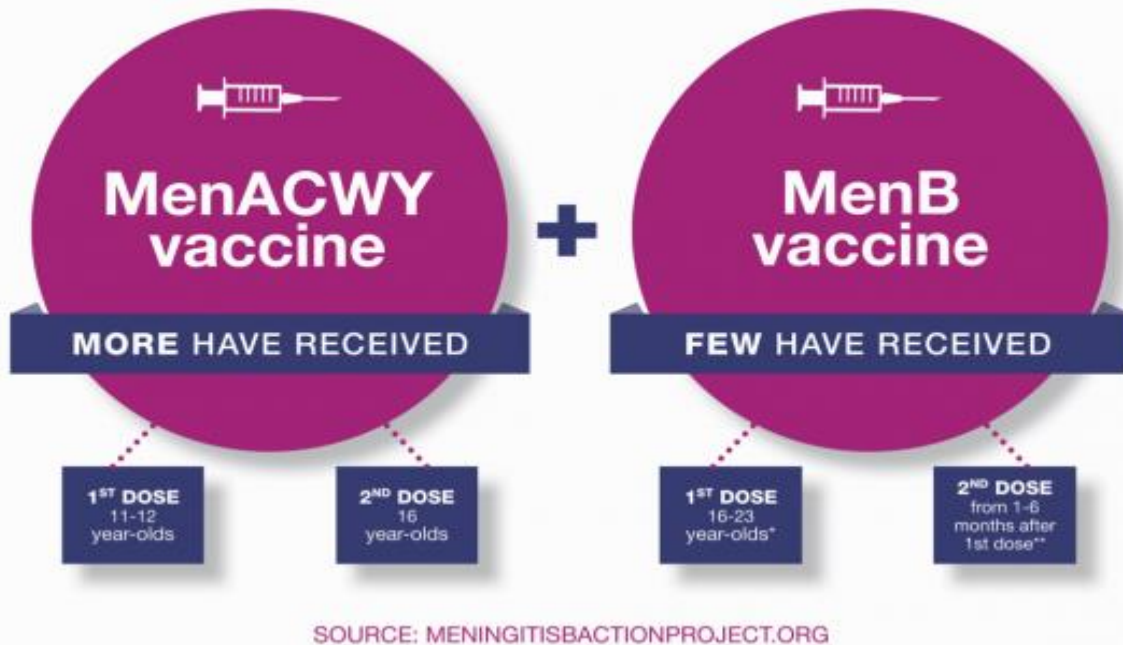


## Protect Yourself and Others

The best way to prevent meningococcal disease is to get vaccinated. Two separate meningitis vaccines are necessary to be fully immunized against the disease: MenACWY and MenB.

Meningococcal disease strain B is the most common cause of bacterial meningitis on college campuses. Despite this, few people have received the MenB vaccine. **Make sure you have BOTH meningitis vaccines to fully protect yourself and those around you.**

For additional information, please visit [meningitisprevention.org](http://meningitisprevention.org).



## Next Steps

If you are not sure that you are up to date on your meningitis vaccines, please call Health Services at (229) 333-5886. A member of our team will be happy to assist you in reviewing your immunization records.