



INFORMATION ABOUT MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

North Carolina law requires all institutions to inform entering college students about the risks of meningococcal disease. Although the meningitis vaccine is not required for admission to Belmont Abbey College, it is strongly recommended.

Meningococcal Disease

Meningococcal disease is a potentially life-threatening bacterial infection that can lead to meningococcal meningitis, an inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord, or meningococcal septicemia, an infection of the blood.

Meningococcal disease, caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*, is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis in older children and young adults in the United States. It strikes 1,400 to 3,000 Americans each year and is responsible for approximately 150 to 300 deaths.

Adolescents and young adults account for nearly 30 percent of all cases of meningitis in the United States. In addition, approximately 100 to 125 cases of meningococcal disease occur on college campuses each year, and five to 15 students will die as a result. Evidence shows approximately 70 to 80 percent of cases in the college age group are caused by serogroup C, Y, or W-135, which are potentially vaccine-preventable. Because disease rates begin to climb earlier in adolescence and peak between the ages of 15 and 20 years, the vaccine is also recommended for all adolescents 11 through 18 years of age.

Additional information can be obtained from:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/vac-mening-fs.htm>