

Dear New Students

VERY IMPORTANT HEALTH INFORMATION – IMMUNISATIONS

Based on the advice of Public Health England, the Oxford College Doctors' Association, and the University of Oxford's Sub-Committee for Student Health and Welfare, we strongly recommend that you receive the following vaccines:

- **Meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY) if you are under 25 years of age**
- **Measles Mumps and Rubella - MMR1 and MMR 2, i.e. the normal two doses**

before you arrive in Oxford, if you have not already received them. Contact your General Practice to arrange this, if necessary. Both immunisations should be readily available outside the UK for international students.

FURTHER INFORMATION: MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

The MenACWY immunisation is a new recommendation prompted by increasing numbers of cases of a highly aggressive form of meningococcal group W (MenW) disease. As a new university entrant, you will be at particular risk of contracting the disease as you are likely to be mixing closely with lots of new people, some of whom may unknowingly carry the meningococcal bacteria. Meningococcal disease can cause meningitis (inflammation of the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning) that can kill in hours, and those who recover may be left severely disabled. Please note that meningitis is not the same condition as encephalitis, against which students from some countries might have been immunised. If you have been immunised against any form of encephalitis, you will still need the MenACWY vaccine.

Further information on meningitis and the new vaccine is available at the NHS Choices website: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis/pages/introduction.aspx>

FURTHER INFORMATION: MEASLES, MUMPS AND RUBELLA (MMR)

Measles and mumps are circulating in the general UK population, particularly among young people. Several outbreaks of mumps have occurred at both universities in Oxford and, year-on-year, the number of cases continues to be significant. If you are not certain that you have received the 2 MMR immunisations, then in line with national policy, we recommend that you obtain them before arriving at University with a month between each dose.

Further information on measles, mumps and rubella, and immunisation against them, is available at the NHS Choices website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mumps/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/rubella/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

ONCE IN OXFORD

When you register with the College Doctor or any other doctor in Oxford, you will be asked for the dates of your immunisations, and have an opportunity to arrange immunisations if you still need to receive them. Information on college doctors and nurses is available at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welf/doctors>. Our College Doctor is Dr Helen Steel at Jericho Health Centre, www.gpjerichotwo.co.uk, and the College Nurse for Keble and Somerville is Glenys Knighton somenurse@nhs.net.

Yours faithfully

Jericho Health Centre / Observatory Medical Practice

Annex

Meningococcal bacteria can cause meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning). Both diseases are very serious and can kill, especially if not diagnosed early. The early symptoms of meningococcal disease are similar to those of flu, so you need to be able to recognise them very quickly (even if you have been vaccinated, the vaccines offered through the routine immunisation programme do not protect against all forms of the disease). A full description of the signs and symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia can be found at www.meningitis.org and www.meningitisnow.org

Look out for any of these symptoms

Not everyone will develop these symptoms and they can appear in any order.

Fever, cold hands and feet
Vomiting and diarrhoea
Drowsiness, difficult to wake up
Irritability and/or confusion
Dislike of bright lights
Severe headache or muscle pains
Pale, blotchy skin with or without a rash
Convulsions/seizures
Stiff neck

Is the vaccine safe?

The vaccine has been used for many years across the world and has a good safety record. Serious side effects from the vaccine are rare.

Does the vaccination hurt? What are the common side effects?

It's like a sting. You may get soreness and some redness and swelling in your arm after the injection – you may also get a headache, but these symptoms should disappear after one or two days. If you feel unwell at any time after vaccination, you should contact your GP.

Do I have to receive it?

All vaccinations in the UK are voluntary but it's recommended that everybody in this age group has the MenACWY vaccine to help protect themselves and others, such as young infants, who may be particularly susceptible to this disease. You remain eligible up to your 25th birthday.

Further information

Further information about the meningitis vaccination programme can be found at the NHS Choices website: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/men-acwy-vaccine.aspx>