



June 20, 2016

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IDAHO COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS & THEIR PARENTS URGED TO PUT VACCINATIONS ON SUMMER TO-DO-LISTS

BOISE – The [Idaho Immunization Coalition](http://idahoimmune.org) (IIC), whose members represent statewide health and medical providers, doctors, nurses, and health departments, is urging college-bound students and their parents to update and include important vaccinations on their to-do-lists for college in the fall.

“This year, as Idaho parents and their high school graduates prepare summer to-do-lists for college with laptops, clothes and dormitory items, we’re asking they also send their young adults with up to date immunizations according to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) necessary to protect from deadly diseases like Type B meningitis and others,” said Karen Sharpnack, executive director of the Idaho Immunization Coalition. “Whether you’re headed to a large public school like Idaho State University, or a smaller campus like The College of Idaho, students need to know that proactive immunization is the best defense against contracting diseases. Recent campus outbreaks of Type B meningitis in Oregon, California and other colleges have raised serious concerns, and we need to make sure our Idaho students are protected through vaccination.”

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Currently, there is no vaccination policy requirement for state universities in Idaho; however, that doesn't mean the risk is not there, according to the IIC.

“Our pharmacy students at Idaho State University realize diseases like Type B meningitis specifically impact their age group, and they have been pushing for stronger vaccination policies and requirements at ISU and other colleges in the state,” said Kevin Cleveland, PharmD, IIC board member and Director of Student Services and Assistant Dean at Idaho State University College of Pharmacy. “While families are aware of basic vaccinations, many don't realize two vaccines are needed to protect against bacterial meningitis. Nearly 14 percent of all meningitis cases are fatal and nearly 20 percent of survivors will suffer from limb amputation, brain injury, hearing loss, reduced kidney function or other serious side effects. So if you are young and heading to college, please put vaccinations on your to-do list and get vaccinated.”

College-ready students and their parents are being asked by the IIC to update and/or schedule the following vaccines with their family doctor this summer:

- Meningococcal 4-valent conjugate
- MenB vaccine (meningococcal B)
- Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis)
- HPV vaccine (human papillomavirus)
- Flu (influenza)
- MMR (mumps, measles and rubella)
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Hep A (hepatitis A)
- Hep B (hepatitis B)

Family physicians can help check and update a student's vaccination record. Another avenue to check vaccination records is the state's Idaho Immunization Program link at:

<http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/IdahoImmunizationProgram/InformationforParentsFamilies/ImmunizationRecords/tabid/2293/Default.aspx>

According to the IIC, health insurance companies now cover the cost of most vaccinations. Additional help is offered through free medical clinics and public health departments throughout the state.

The Idaho Immunization Coalition is a vital assembly of statewide stakeholders dedicated to promoting health and preventing serious illness through immunization protection of all Idahoans. The coalition is a 501c3 non-profit organization to enhance the existing immunization system in Idaho. For more information, please visit www.idahoimmune.org.