



COUNTY OF IMPERIAL

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

Meningococcal Disease Outbreak at SDSU-San Diego Campus

Two San Diego State University undergraduate students have been hospitalized with serogroup B meningococcal disease this semester, prompting the San Diego County public health officer to declare an outbreak on campus.

The most recent case is a male undergraduate student who became symptomatic with meningitis on September 25, the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency announced. Testing done at the California Department of Public Health lab identified the cause of the illness as serogroup B meningococcus, the same bacteria that hospitalized a female SDSU undergraduate earlier this month. Close contacts of the new case were identified and provided antibiotics to prevent illness. There is no need for antibiotics for those who were not in direct contact.

A third case was a female SDSU undergraduate who was not attending classes at the time and lived off campus. That case, which occurred in June during the summer break, also became ill from the same serogroup of the bacteria. There was no potential exposure as school was not in session.

Dr. Stephen Munday, Imperial County Public Health Officer, recommends that all unimmunized SDSU undergraduate students under the age of 24 get vaccinated with one of two available meningococcal B vaccines. SDSU graduate students, open university students, staff, faculty, and visitors are not currently recommended to get the vaccination.

Signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease are usually sudden onset of fever, headache, and stiff neck. The illness can start with symptoms similar to influenza, and will often also cause nausea, vomiting, increased sensitivity to light, rash, and

confusion. Anyone with potential exposure who develops any of these symptoms should immediately contact a health-care provider or emergency room for an evaluation for possible meningococcal disease.

The bacteria can be spread through close contact, such as sharing drinking glasses, eating utensils, cigarettes or pipes, or water bottles; kissing; and living in close quarters. The time between exposure to the disease and the onset of symptoms can be between two to 10 days.

Preventive antibiotics are not recommended for individuals who were not in close contact with the infected person and do not have symptoms. They should be aware of possible symptoms and make sure they have received the recommended vaccination against the disease.

Serogroup B disease has been the cause of university/college outbreaks in the United States since 2008, including two others in California: one at the University of California-Santa Barbara in 2013 and one at Santa Clara University in 2016.

Information about meningococcal disease is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/>

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