



# NEWS RELEASE

## EUROPE REGIONAL MEDICAL COMMAND

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

CMR 442 APO AE 09042  
U.S. ARMY HOSPITAL – NACHRICHTEN KASERNE  
POSTFACH 103180 69021 HEIDELBERG, GERMANY  
DSN 371-3317/3049 TEL. 06221-7-3317/3049  
JERI CHAPPELLE CELL – 0162-270-0456

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6 April 2007

## **COLLEGE STUDENTS ENCOURAGED TO GET VACCINE**

### *Dormitories ripe with meningitis bacteria*

HEIDELBERG, Germany – When high school students receive their acceptances to college, they should also receive something else: a vaccination.

The potentially life threatening bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis* commonly infects military personnel living in barracks and college students living in dormitories. Basic trainees routinely receive the vaccine to protect them against several types of meningitis and other infections. Health officials recommend that college-bound students receive the vaccine, too.

“College freshmen that live in dormitories are five times more likely to get a meningococcal infection as compared with those who live off campus or don’t attend college,” said Dr. (Lt. Col.) William P. Corr, the Europe Regional Medical Command’s consultant for preventive Medicine at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

Vaccination is a proven way to reduce the risk of infection.

“Over the past 12 months, many DOD children in Europe have been vaccinated against meningococcal infections,” said Corr, “but for those teenagers that haven’t been vaccinated and are going to college, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends one shot of a vaccine that protects against four types of meningitis-causing bacteria.” The vaccine is long lasting, and the current guidance is to receive the vaccine only once in a lifetime.

Corr recommends the meningococcal vaccine for several other groups of people:

- Adolescents entering middle school (11-12 year olds) or high school (15 years old)
- A child or adult without a spleen
- Children and adults who lack “complement proteins,” a particular group of serum proteins that help the body fight infection
- People exposed to someone infected with meningitis types A, C, Y, or W-135
- Children and adults traveling to sub-Saharan Africa between December and June

Please contact your local medical treatment facility for more information about receiving the meningococcal vaccine.