## Meningitis C

Meningococcal infection is a serious illness caused by a bacterium known as meningococcus. There are several different groups of meningococci. Before vaccination against group C meningococcal infection was introduced in 1999, there were a number of outbreaks of meningitis at universities in the UK. Since then, group C meningococcal infection has become very rare. There is as yet no vaccination for the most common group of meningococci in the UK (group B) and cases of group B meningococcal infection still occur.

*Students are strongly advised to have the vaccination against meningitis C* ***before arriving in Cambridge****. If this is not possible, please discuss it with your doctor or college nurse as soon as possible after your arrival.*

Further information about meningitis can be found on the old Health Protection Agency (HPA) website: http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/MeningococcalDisease/

## Mumps and measles

Mumps and measles can be serious infections. We continue to see cases and clusters of both these diseases. The University of Cambridge was itself affected by a large outbreak of mumps during October – December 2004. Measles cases are currently increasing in England with a record annual high of almost 2000 cases in 2012.

Many people now in their teens and twenties have either not been immunised at all or have had only one dose of MMR vaccination. People born in the UK after 1980 are likely to be susceptible to measles and mumps if they have not had two doses of MMR. This is because they are less likely to be immune as a result of exposure to natural disease.

*MMR vaccine can be given to people of any age. National policy is to provide two doses of MMR vaccine at appropriate intervals for all eligible individuals. We strongly recommend that all students ensure that they have had two doses of the MMR vaccine before coming to university.*

## Tuberculosis (TB)

TB is a serious but curable disease. Like most countries worldwide, the UK has been seeing an increase in TB that is highest in London and the other major cities where the risk factors tend to be concentrated. The TB rate is much higher in the foreign-born population than in the UK-born, the rate being also higher in certain ethnic groups in the first few years after they enter the country. In the UK, those at most risk of developing TB disease include people who are close contacts of a person with infectious TB and those who have visited, lived or worked for a long time in countries with a high rate of TB. Countries that have high rates of TB over 40/100,000 of the population are listed at http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Tuberculosis/

The BCG vaccine has been in use for many years to help protect against TB. It is recommended for all healthcare workers and for some high-risk groups. *If you have not already been vaccinated and:*

*(a)* ***if you are joining as a medical student*** *– this will be discussed as part of your Occupational Health screening, or*

*(b)* ***if you are a new entrant to the UK from a country with a high prevalence of TB*** *(see web link above) – you should discuss this with your doctor or college nurse.*

If vaccination is needed, you will be referred to the local chest clinic as this vaccine is not usually given in general practice.

Diagnosis of infection in young people can be delayed because often neither they nor their doctor consider it as a possibility. If you develop symptoms, such as a persistent cough that lasts for three weeks or more; appetite and weight loss; and fever and sweating at night, you should see your doctor.

## Influenza

Influenza is an acute viral infection of the respiratory tract. There are three types of influenza virus: A, B and C. Influenza A and B are responsible for most illness. Influenza is highly infectious with an incubation period of one to three days. Serious illness and death from influenza are highest among young babies, older people and those with underlying disease, particularly chronic lung and heart disease, or those who are immunosuppressed.

The currently available influenza vaccines give 70 to 80% protection against infection with influenza virus strains well matched with those in the vaccine. The vaccine is given annually between October and December. Protection afforded by the vaccine lasts for about one year

*If you suffer from chronic lung, heart, kidney or liver disease or have diabetes or are otherwise immunosuppressed, please discuss this with your doctor or college nurse.*

For further information see the HPA website: http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Influenza/.

## Further information

The Cambridge Student Health website http://www.camstudenthealth.nhs.uk which has been developed by local GP surgeries provides information and guidance about a wide range of health matters and services for University students.