



OFFICE OF RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION AND SERVICES  
335 East Swensson Street (785) 227-3311 ext. 8345  
Lindsborg, KS 67456 [www.bethanylb.edu](http://www.bethanylb.edu)

Dear Bethany Students,

This letter is to give you some information and inform you of the risks of Meningitis. Meningitis is an inflammation of the membranes (meninges) surrounding your brain and spinal cord. The swelling from meningitis typically triggers symptoms such as headache, fever and a stiff neck. Most cases of meningitis in the U.S. are caused by a viral infection, but bacterial and fungal infections are other causes. Some cases of meningitis improve without treatment in a few weeks. Others can be life-threatening and require emergent antibiotic treatment.

Studies have shown that the risk of getting meningitis is approximately 1 in 100,000, but that risk increases anywhere from 9-23 times in students residing in dormitories or community housing. As mentioned above, early symptoms can include but are not limited to sudden high fever, stiff neck, severe headache (different than normal), headache with nausea or vomiting, and confusion or difficulty concentrating. If any of these symptoms occur, especially if they occur together, students are encouraged to seek medication attention immediately.

A vaccine is available and is shown to be 80%-90% effective at preventing meningitis. The vaccine is available through your primary care doctor, Family Health Care Clinic (Lindsborg), or the McPherson County Health Department (McPherson) and is generally covered by insurance. For questions about getting the vaccine please see the nurse in Health Services.

The state of Kansas and Bethany college requires all students living in college housing receive the vaccination or sign a waiver indicating that they are aware of the risk of Meningitis and feel informed in the decision to not be vaccinated. This requirement must be met prior to moving in to campus housing. All students whom has been vaccinated in the past must provide documentation of that immunization. The vaccine must be current (received within the past 5 years). These documents will become part of your permanent health record and will be kept with Health Services. If you choose to receive the vaccine through your primary care doctor, please have them provide you with the documentation to give to Bethany College.

Sincerely,

Bethany College Residential Education and Health Services