



OUR LADY  
OF THE LAKE  
COLLEGE

*Franciscan Missionaries of  
Our Lady Health System*

September 15, 2006

Dear Student:

I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis, and a new law in Louisiana. On June 22, 2006, Governor Blanco signed Louisiana Acts 251 and 711 requiring colleges and universities to distribute information about meningococcal disease to students and to require students to show proof of vaccination against meningococcal disease. This new law affects all entering freshman students meeting the enrollment criteria. This law is effective August 15, 2006.

By law, Our Lady of the Lake College is required to maintain a record of the following for each student:

1) A response to receipt of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Meningococcal Vaccines—What You Need to Know* Vaccine Information Statement signed by the student or student's parent or guardian;

**AND**

2) **EITHER** A record of meningococcal meningitis immunization within the past ten (10) years; **OR** the Waiver of Vaccination and Release from Responsibility form signed by the student or the student's parent or guardian.

Meningococcal meningitis is rare. However, when it strikes, its flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult. If not treated early, meningococcal meningitis can lead to swelling of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal column as well as severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, limb amputation and even death.

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Cases of meningitis among teens and young adults 15 to 24 years of age have more than doubled since 1991. The disease strikes about 2,500 Americans each year and claims about 300 lives. Between 100 and 125 meningitis cases occur on college campuses annually, and as many as 15 students die from the disease.

In February 2005, the CDC recommended a newly licensed vaccine for use, known as Menactra™, to prevent meningococcal disease. The previous version of this vaccine, Menomune™, was first made available in the United States in 1985. Both vaccines are 85% to nearly 100% effective in preventing four (4) types of the meningococcus germ (types A, C, Y, and W-135). These four types cause about 70% of the disease in the United States. Because the vaccine does not include type B, which accounts for about one-third of cases in adolescents, it does not prevent all cases of meningococcal disease.

I encourage you to carefully review the enclosed materials. If the student elects not to receive the vaccination for any reason, please be certain to complete and sign the enclosed Waiver of Vaccination and Release from Responsibility form and return to:

Our Lady of the Lake College  
Attn: Admissions  
7434 Perkins Road  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

*A STUDENT'S REGISTRATION IS NOT COMPLETE UNTIL THIS REQUIREMENT IS FULFILLED.*

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, please feel free to contact the Office of Health & Safety at 768-1755 and/or consult your physician. You can also find information about the disease at our website: <http://ololcollege.kfx2.com/content/student-health> , the Centers for Disease Control website: <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.htm>, or the American College Health Association website: [www.acha.org/meningitis](http://www.acha.org/meningitis) .

Sincerely,

Denise Gillespie RN BSN  
Director, Campus Health & Safety  
Our Lady of the Lake College  
(225) 768-1755