

## **Critical Information regarding legislated vaccinations for all college students.**

**Effective July 1, 2008, all new matriculating students will need to be vaccinated against meningitis and hepatitis B diseases or sign a waiver (if over the age of 18).**

### **Meningitis**

Meningococcal disease is a potentially life threatening bacterial infection that can lead to meningococcal meningitis, an inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord, or meningococcal septicemia, an infection of the blood.

Meningococcal disease, caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*, is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis in older children and young adults in the United States. It is contagious and progresses very rapidly. The bacteria are spread person to person through the air by respiratory droplets. The bacteria also can be transmitted through kissing, sharing personal items such as drinking out of an infected person's cup.

Common symptoms of meningitis include stiff neck, headache, fever, sensitivity to light, sleepiness, vomiting, confusion, and seizures. The symptoms often resemble the flu making it sometimes difficult to diagnose.

The Manactra Vaccine is recommended for all newly matriculated students in the state of Florida. Those living in close quarters, such as college dormitories, are considered to be at an increased risk of acquiring the disease. The vaccine protects against 4 out of the 5 most common strains of bacterial meningitis. It does not offer protection against viral meningitis.

More information is available at the Centers for Disease Control website @ [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or at the Meningitis Foundation of America website @ [www.musa.org](http://www.musa.org).

You can receive the meningitis vaccine at your physician's office, the local health department or the Student Health Services at Florida Gulf Coast University.

### **Hepatitis B**

Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver. The virus, which is called hepatitis B virus (HBV), can cause lifelong infections, cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death.

About 30% of persons have no signs or symptoms. Symptoms of Hepatitis B may include jaundice, fatigue, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and joint pain.

Infection with the HBV can occur when the blood of an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected. It can also be spread sexually, through needle sticks, mother to baby transmission, or tattoo or body piercing with infected needle. You may be at risk if you have had multiple sex partners, injection drug use, exposure on the job (mostly healthcare workers) , infected blood transfusions, household contacts of chronically infected persons.

More information can be found at the website for the Centers for Disease Control website @ [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

Hepatitis B vaccine is the best protection. Side effects from hepatitis B vaccines are rare. Contact your physicians office, local health department , or the Student Health Services department at Florida Gulf Coast University.