

MAVERICK HEALTH

A newsletter devoted to student health at Minnesota State University, Mankato

Summer 2006

New Marketing Campaign Hits Campus

By now, many people on and around campus have noticed the colorful posters and bus 'wraps' with the bold "MSU gets it" messages. "MSU gets it", a marketing campaign designed to correct misperceptions many have about MSU students and their alcohol use was launched in early March 2006. The marketing campaign is based on the social norms model of behavior change: use a variety of media sources to challenge misperceptions about student behavior and "advertise" true student behaviors to reduce problems associated with alcohol use. The first "MSU gets it" message announced that a majority of MSU students use a designated driver. Based on 2004 data collected from MSU students in randomly chosen classes, over 79% of MSU students reported they use a designated driver when they party. Other messages followed including "Most MSU students eat before or while they drink" and "Of MSU students who drink, most keep track of how much they consume when partying."

Student Health Services, the MSU department responsible for the "MSU gets it" campaign, was awarded grant money from the National Institute on Alcohol and Alcohol Abuse to design and implement the marketing campaign at Minnesota State Mankato. Data collected from over 1,300 MSU

students in 2004 and over 1,100 MSU students in 2006 using the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) provides the statistics for the campaign. National College Health Assessment surveys are voluntarily and anonymously completed by MSU students in randomly chosen classes during Spring semester. The 58-question survey asks about a variety of student health behaviors including alcohol use, sexuality, sleep habits, nutrition, and exercise.

In addition to asking students to report on their own behavior, the survey asks students to estimate fellow student behaviors as well.

The survey results can point out significant differences in actual student behavior and what students perceive to be typical behavior among their friends and classmates attending MSU. For instance, one "MSU gets it" message points out that MSU students drink less than you think: less than 1% of MSU students drink alcohol daily. Students completing the 2006 NCHA survey estimated that nearly 47% of their fellow students drank alcohol daily, a significant overestimation of actual behavior. A statistical summary of MSU student alcohol use and other health behaviors is available on the Student Health Services webpage at www.mnsu.edu/shs/NCHA2004.pdf

The logo features the letters "MSU" in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter "S" is stylized with a white outline and a shadow effect. Below "MSU" is the phrase "gets it." in a smaller, bold, black, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a white background.

Sometimes It's the Simple Things...

It wouldn't seem like the simple act of hand washing could have a major impact on life but consider this: every year in the United States, foodborne illnesses cause 76 million people to get diarrhea, 325,000 people need to be hospitalized, and 5000 people die. The Centers for Disease Control cites common household scenarios in which disease-causing germs can be transmitted by contaminated hands:

Hands to food: germs are transmitted from unclean hands to food, usually by an infected food preparer who didn't handwash after using the toilet. The germs are then passed to those who eat the food.

Food to hands to food: germs are transmitted from raw, uncooked foods, such as chicken, to hands; the germs are then transferred to other foods, such as salad. Cooking the raw food kills the initial germs, but the salad remains contaminated.

Nose, mouth, or eyes to hands to others: germs that cause illnesses can spread to the hands by sneezing, coughing, or rubbing the eyes and then can be transferred to other family members or friends.

Proper handwashing, vigorously rubbing the hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, can effectively reduce the number of germs on hands. And it doesn't need to be antibacterial soap—the scrubbing action combined with the soap and water effectively dislodges germs.



Frequently Asked Questions about Meningococcal Disease and Meningitis

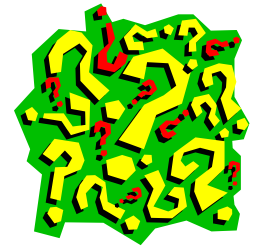
The recent illness and death of a Minnesota State University, Mankato student from meningitis has prompted many questions about the illness. The following Meningococcal Disease and Meningitis FAQs can provide additional information for those with questions or concerns.

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is a serious illness caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria. It can cause meningitis, an infection of the brain and spinal cord coverings, and blood infections.

How does meningococcal disease spread?

Meningococcal disease is spread by close or direct contact with secretions from the nose and throat (e.g. coughing, sneezing). Kissing, sharing silverware, drinking directly from the same container, and sharing a cigarette or lipstick/lip balm are examples of how the disease spreads.



What are the symptoms of meningitis?

Symptoms of meningococcal meningitis can include a high fever, headache, a very stiff neck, confusion, irritability, nausea, sensitivity to light, vomiting, and exhaustion. A rash may also develop. A person may become seriously ill very quickly, so contact your student health service or health care provider immediately if you have two or more of these symptoms.

It takes approximately 1 - 10 days from the time a person is exposed to the bacteria until symptoms appear.

How is meningococcal disease treated?

Meningococcal disease can be treated with a number of antibiotics. Preventative antibiotics should be given to those who have had close or direct contact with an infected person as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours.

How can I protect myself from getting meningococcal disease?

Wash your hands often and avoid sharing silverware, drinking containers, lipstick/lip balm, and smoking materials. There is also a vaccine that can prevent meningococcal disease.

What should I know about the meningococcal vaccine?

The vaccine is highly effective (85-100 percent) at preventing four of the major strains of bacteria that cause meningococcal meningitis on college campuses. There is one other strain that circulates that is not included in the vaccine.

For most college students only one dose of the vaccine is needed. The vaccine protects for five to 10 years. Immunity develops within 7 - 10 days after vaccination.

A vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of this vaccine causing serious harm is extremely small. Getting the meningococcal vaccine is much safer than getting the disease.

How can I learn more about meningococcal disease and the vaccine?

Contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato Student Health Services at 507-389-6276. The Student Health Services Medical Clinic is located in the lower level of Carkoski Commons. Summer hours for the Clinic are 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday when classes are in session.

Visit the following sites:

[Minnesota Department of Health Meningococcal page](#) or [American College Health Association](#)

Information for this article was adapted from Minnesota Department of Health materials.

MSU STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

REAL DOCTORS. REAL NURSES. REAL CONVENIENCE ON CAMPUS.

APPOINTMENTS & INFORMATION—389-6276

HEALTH EDUCATION—389-5689

PHARMACY—389-2483

NURSE LINE—389-6710

OR VISIT US ONLINE AT: WWW.MNSU.EDU/SHS

LOWER LEVEL—CARKOSKI COMMONS