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UNH Official Reports Suspected Meningitis Case: Precautions and Actions Being Taken to Prevent Infection from Spreading

Editors and writers: The UNH spokesperson for this story is Kevin Charles. He can be reached at his office, 603-862-1098, or at home, 603-749-5477.

By [Kim Billings](#)
UNH News Bureau

February 18, 2002

DURHAM, N.H. -- A University of New Hampshire official has confirmed that a UNH student has become ill with a serious bloodstream infection suspected to be meningococcal.

Kevin Charles, UNH assistant vice president for student affairs and director of Health Services, says the student apparently became ill last week and sought care with a health care provider in his hometown. He is currently hospitalized in Massachusetts.

Because the bacteria are spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions, e.g. coughing, sneezing, kissing, or by direct contact with an infected person, such as sharing a water bottle or a cigarette, individuals who have had close contact with the infected student are being assessed and some are being treated with antibiotics to prevent the spread of the infection.

"The bacteria that cause meningococcal disease are not spread by casual contact or by breathing the air where a person with the disease has been," explains Charles, "this is not as contagious as things like the common cold or flu."

According to Charles, the university has been working closely with the New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services, Bureau of Disease Control to identify

other people who may have had contact with the student.

There is more information on the disease, how it is spread, treatment, and the vaccine posted on the Health Services website, at www.unh.edu/health-services/meningitis.htm. You may also call 862-1530 for more information.

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