

THE PENDULUM

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Freshmen at risk for meningitis

Jennifer Guarino

Managing Editor

College freshmen living in dormitories are at a greater risk of contracting meningitis. A recent report by the Journal of the American Medical Association found that these students are seven times more likely to be infected with the meningitis bacteria than other college students. The researchers also reported that the use of the vaccination could reduce the risk of disease.

Meningitis is a potentially deadly bacterial infection that affects more than 3,000 Americans, resulting in 300 deaths each year. College students are more prone to contracting the disease than other groups of the population. It is estimated that 100 to 125 cases, causing 5 to 10 deaths, occur on college campuses each year. The frequency of outbreaks on college campuses has risen during the past 10 years.

There has never been a case of meningitis at Elon; however, there was a case in a North Carolina college two years ago, Kitty Parrish, director of R.N. Ellington Health and Counseling Center, said. If a case is discovered, the health de-

partment will assess the situation and assist Elon on prevention.

The Center for Disease Control Prevention conducted a study from September 1998 through August 1999. Researchers surveyed state health departments and 231 college health centers. They found that of 96 cases of meningococcal disease, about one-third of the cases were found in freshmen students, although this group represented four percent of the population studied.

The CDC reports that freshmen are at a greater risk because of lifestyle factors associated with these students: communal living, bar patronage, smoking and irregular sleeping habits. Meningitis is transmitted through close contact with infected persons, including kissing or sharing utensils. Cases tend to occur more frequently in late winter and early spring.

While there was not a clear relationship between the lifestyle factors and the infection, the CDC suggests that students living in dorms are more at risk because they are exposed to the bacteria more often. The close quarters and often less-than-clean environment is the perfect place for the bacteria to cultivate and spread quickly.

Meningitis can occur in two forms: meningococcal meningitis, an inflammation that affects the brain and spinal cord, or meningococemia, bacteria in the blood. The disease can result in permanent brain damage, hearing loss, learning disability, organ failure, loss of limbs or death, according to the Meningitis Foundation of America. Symptoms can occur within hours or days of infection, and resemble the flu. They include high fever, severe headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, exhaustion, rash and sensitivity to light.

The CDC strongly suggests that all students be given the vaccination. "It's not prevalent, but it is there," Parrish said. "It's not something we want to ignore."

Of the nine percent of student who died from meningitis, 70 percent of those cases could have been prevented by the vaccination. The meningococcal meningitis vaccine lasts for four years and is 85 to 100 percent effective.

The health center will sponsor meningitis vaccinations Oct. 30 from 1 to 7 p.m. The vaccination will cost \$85. Parrish advised that students check with their insurance company regarding coverage.

Band swings into full practice



Jennifer Guarino/Managing Editor

The new marching band began practicing this week on the intramural athletic fields. More than 70 students in the band, color guard and drill team met twice a day to learn two half-time shows featuring music from "Chicago," "Earth, Wind and Fire" and Latin jazz tunes. The band's first official performance will be at the Rhodes Stadium opening Sept. 15. The previous band, the Showband of the Carolinas, disbanded in 1982. Director Bill De Journett was hired last year to revive the tradition.

Special Edition: Freshmen Survival Guide

Welcome to Elon! We're excited that you're here. The Pendulum staff spent the summer revamping Elon's only student newspaper and creating a special back to school edition. Inside you will find stories just for freshmen and new students. From dorm room essentials to dining options on campus, we hope this paper makes your transition to college a bit easier. If you have suggestions, comments or questions, please contact us by e-mail (pendulum@elon.edu), phone (ext. 7247) or by stopping by our office (Moseley 233).

Best of luck,
The Pendulum Staff

Elon welcomes Class of 2005

Elizabeth Sudduth

News Editor

With a new name and a new academic year approaching, Elon University will welcome the most talented and qualified freshmen class of its 112-year history.

"These students are better qualified," said Susan Klopman, dean of admissions and financial planning.

Members of the class of 2005 will arrive on campus today, coming from 39 states and joining 26 new international students who arrived on Wednesday.

Twenty two percent of the stu-

dents are from North Carolina, followed by Maryland and Virginia with 13 percent, 11 percent from the New England states, 10 percent from Florida and Georgia, 8 percent from New York and New Jersey and 6 percent from Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.

Fifty-three percent of this year's projected 1,230 freshmen graduated in the top-quarter of their high school classes. The average SAT score of the entering students was 1125.

Students entering as Fellows, recognizing excellence in honors, business, communications/journal-

ism, leadership, science and teaching make up 13 percent of the freshmen class. The Fellows students have an average SAT of 1228 and average high school GPA of 3.92.

Presidential Scholars make up 28 percent of the class, with an average SAT of 1222 and high school GPA of 3.90.

A new student convocation is to be held Saturday, Aug. 25 at 9 a.m., Under the Oaks in front of West Dormitory.

The overall student enrollment is projected to be 4,350. Students will begin classes Aug. 28.