

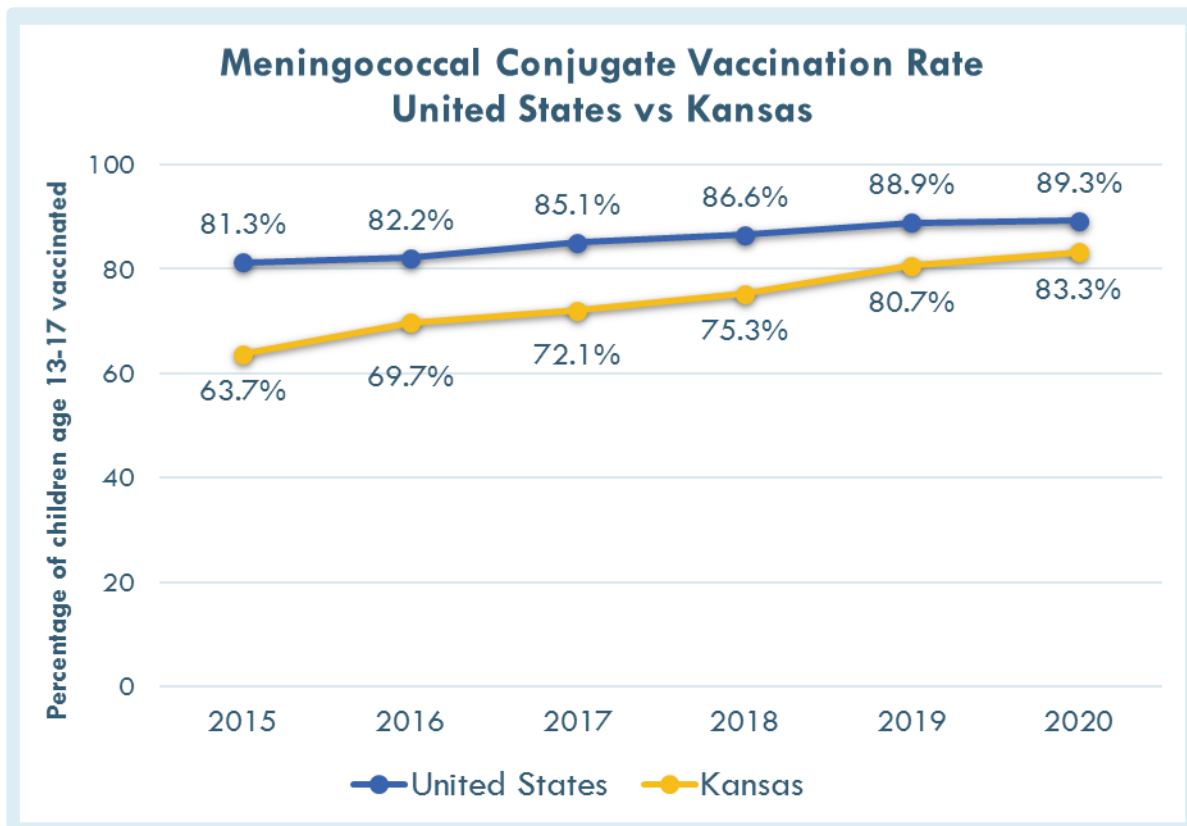


## What is Meningococcal Disease?

Meningococcal disease is an umbrella term for any illness caused by the bacteria *Neisseria meningitides* (also known as meningococcus). Meningococcal disease is severe and can cause infections in the blood stream (bacteremia) or infections of the lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis). This disease acts rapidly and can kill people within 24 hours from the onset of symptoms. The early symptoms of meningococcal disease are very similar to the flu, such as a fever, headache, and a stiff neck. More serious symptoms include sensitivity to light, vomiting, rash, confusion and loss of consciousness.

## Facts about Meningococcal Disease:

- About 1 in 10 cases is fatal
- About 2 out of the 9 people who survive will have permanent disabilities. Disabilities could be a loss of an arm or leg, a brain injury, or a hearing loss.
- A person can get the disease by kissing, drinking after someone, coughing, or sneezing.



This graph shows the percentage of children ages 13-17 who have received at least one dose of the meningococcal conjugate vaccine in the United States compared to Kansas. Kansas falls below the national immunization average for meningococcal conjugate vaccination. (Source: CDC NIS-Teen 2020)

## Andy's Story



Andy was in his senior year at the University of Kansas (KU). He was living in the scholarship halls when he became incredibly sick. Some friends rushed him to the KU Watkins Health Center and he was soon taken to Lawrence Memorial Hospital, where he was diagnosed with bacterial meningitis. He was airlifted to KU Hospital that night and spent the next 141 days there battling for his life against the bacteria that ultimately cost him parts of all four limbs. He wrote in a blog, things that he would go back and tell himself before the disease. He says, "I want to warn him that when he wakes up from that coma, he will face suffering worse than any he has ever imagined for himself... I want to tell him that in losing that (comfortable life), he will gain a new purpose." Andy now advocates for meningococcal vaccines on college campuses. Read more about Andy's miraculous story at [www.tinyurl.com/Andys-Story](http://www.tinyurl.com/Andys-Story).

## IKC Meningococcal Vaccine Goals:

Immunize Kansas Coalition (IKC) continues to monitor quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine rates to maintain coverage above 80% in Kansas. Since 2019, the rate of Kansas teens ages 13-17 receiving at least one dose of the quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine has met or exceeded the 80% goal, but Kansas still remains in the bottom quintile of states for this vaccination rate. In 2020 in Kansas only 83.3% of teens had received one dose, below the 89.3% national average.

IKC  
Goal

**IKC's goal is to maintain quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine rates in Kansas youth ages 13 to 17 above 80%.**

## Provider Recommendations:

A strong recommendation from clinicians:

**It is a routine vaccination. The first meningococcal vaccine is administered at 11 or 12 years old.**

**Vaccinate before you graduate! Emphasize that a 2<sup>nd</sup> dose is needed at age 16 to complete the series.**

**If a parent has concerns about the vaccine, listen respectfully, clarify their concern, then discuss the vaccine in a nonjudgmental way, seeking to address the parent's concerns.**

**Some populations are at a higher risk than others; especially those planning to live in college dorms or going into the military should get vaccinated! This is also a good time to discuss the Men B vaccine with your patient.**

"After we get you in for your first vaccination, let's make sure we make you an appointment for your 2nd dose. You aren't fully covered with only one dose!"

Sample language

[www.immunizekansascalioation.org](http://www.immunizekansascalioation.org)