

July 2020

Dear Doctor/Practice Nurse,

Your patient studies at Cambridge University and I am writing to ask for your help on two preventive health matters. First, in ensuring that they are up-to-date with vaccinations, and second, to ensure that the University is as fully informed as possible about any increased susceptibility to infectious diseases they may have, including to COVID-19.

Meningitis and MMR vaccination for students

As you will be aware meningococcal meningitis can be a serious problem in communities such as ours. We would therefore be grateful if you would offer this vaccination in line with the UK's meningitis (ACWY) vaccine catch-up programme for university students under the age of 25 if they did not receive it before taking up their place at Cambridge.

In Cambridge over recent years, in common with other universities and colleges, we have had outbreaks of measles and mumps amongst students. The associated illness and the need for isolation and suspension from studies and exams have caused significant distress and disruption. It would appear that this situation has arisen because some students received only one dose of MMR and their immunity has now declined. Current advice is that they should receive two doses. I would be grateful for your help in providing a second dose to your patient before they come back Cambridge if they have not already received one.

Increased susceptibility to infectious diseases such as COVID-19 and students with disabilities

We are committed to supporting all students in their studies, including those with concerns about increased susceptibility to infectious diseases (ISID) such as COVID-19. Health and infection control measures will be promoted across the University but targeted support for students with increased susceptibility will be based on individual risk assessment. A critical first step for this will be self-declaration of susceptibility by the student. Colleges will write to all students in coming weeks asking them to notify us of concerns surrounding their susceptibility to COVID-19 or other infectious diseases based on Public Health England's (PHE) definitions of higher or very high risk groups. Support will also be offered to students who have a disability (including a mental health condition such as OCD that can be defined as a disability) which might be exacerbated by living in Cambridge under current circumstances. Students declaring increased susceptibility, or with a disability which might be exacerbated by the current situation, will be asked to supply a letter from their doctor or health care provider outlining their susceptibility or condition and highlighting specific needs, as soon as possible. Support will be adjusted according to need and will be tailored for each student but will range from arrangements for enhanced social distancing, nurse-delivered advice and guidance through to, for those most severely at risk, adapted learning, assessment and accommodation adjustments. These arrangements will be

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made directly with students, although your further input may be requested. In the meantime we are communicating frequently with all incoming students on COVID-19 related arrangements including matters such as the availability of wellbeing support.

If requested by your patient, your assistance in supplying them with a letter describing their susceptibility or condition, would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jane Greated & Dr Robert Henderson

On behalf of the Advisory Group on Communicable Diseases
University of Cambridge