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UF Student Health Care Center offering vaccines to prevent Meningitis B outbreak

Fotini Sisois, Contributing Writer Oct 14, 2018 Updated 12 hrs ago



Dr. Amit Rawal's nearly 6-month-old daughter Avnee seemed normal when she woke up from a fever in October 2013.

A few hours later, he noticed a rash on her neck. It wasn't until she died 15 hours later that he learned Avnee contracted Meningitis B.

Rawal is collaborating with the UF Student Health Care Center to prevent UF students from experiencing what Avnee went through, he said.



The center will offer flu and Meningitis B vaccinations during this year's second Chomp the Flu event from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m Wednesday on the Reitz Union North Lawn, said Cecilia Luna, the center's spokesperson.

This is the first time the center has planned two Chomp the Flu events in one Fall semester and partnered with the Avnee Foundation, the nonprofit organization Rawal co-founded with his wife Melissa Rawal, Luna said.

Rawal reached out to the center to collaborate on educating students about Meningitis B and providing vaccinations, Luna said.

"More than 97 percent of the UF population is walking around only 50 percent protected by this deadly disease," Rawal said.

During the first Chomp the Flu last month, about 430 students were vaccinated for Meningitis, Luna said.



There are two vaccines for Meningitis B, but 2 percent of UF students have gotten both, she said. The events were planned 30 days apart for those who were vaccinated in September to complete vaccinations Wednesday.

Students must bring their Gator 1 Card and proof of insurance to be vaccinated for free, Luna said.

UF requires students to be vaccinated for four types of meningitis, not including type B. The goal is for UF to require the type B vaccine within the next year or two, Luna said.

Meningitis B is a disease caused by bacteria that inflames the brain and spinal cord, Rawal said. Infants, adolescents and college-aged students are most at risk.

“This disease is in our backyard, it’s deadly and it is now vaccine-preventable,” he said.

