

# Researchers to test vaccine for meningitis on campus

■ Radiant Research says it is looking especially for students in residence halls to participate

By Kara Cogswell  
Oregon Daily Emerald

A new vaccine for meningitis being tested in Eugene this week could protect against the disease longer than the existing vaccine, according to the doctor leading the study.

Dr. Donald England, the medical director of Radiant Research in Eugene, said researchers are looking for 100 people to participate in tests this week. If those spots are filled, Radiant Research may conduct a second round of tests with another 100 people, he said.

In particular, researchers are interested in finding students who live in residence halls to take part in the study, he said. According to another study published in the American Medical Journal in Au-

gust, college students who live in residence halls are at a greater risk of contracting the disease.

"We're hoping to get a big turnout from the University, because that's the group with the biggest problem — and where we could do the most good," he said.

Meningitis, an infection of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord, can take bacterial and viral forms. Meningococcal disease, a bacterial infection spread through close oral contact such as kissing, sneezing or sharing utensils, often leads to meningitis.

Jill Dieringer, a freshman at the University, died of meningococcal disease in February. After her death, hundreds of students went to the University Health Center to get the meningitis vaccine.

This fall, students received a fact sheet on the disease and the vaccine when they moved in to the residence halls, University Housing

Director Michael Eyster said.

Eyster said he worked with University Health Center Director Dr. Gerald Fleischli to put together the information for housing residents to let students know a vaccine was available.

They did not go as far as recommending that students get the vaccine, because it does not protect against all strains of meningitis, and it is difficult to assess risk factors for the disease, he said.

According to the American College Health Association, students who smoke or frequent bars regularly may be at a higher risk for contracting meningococcal disease. England said smoking may increase the risk for contracting meningitis because it weakens people's natural defenses against infections that spread through the respiratory tract. The smoke in many bars puts non-smokers at risk as well, he said.

About half the participants in the

study will receive the new vaccine. The rest will be given the existing vaccine, he said.

Both vaccines, which are made by the national drug company Aventis Pasteur, protect against 4 out of 5 existing strains of meningitis, which account for about two-thirds of meningitis cases, he said.

The new vaccine is expected to remain effective longer than the existing vaccine, which only lasts a few years, he said.

There is no cost for the vaccine for participants in the study, he said. At the health center, the vaccine costs \$66.

Researchers will draw blood from participants during the initial visit when they get the vaccine, and at a follow-up visit a month later to compare the effects of the vaccines, he said. Participants will be paid \$25 for each visit.

Radiant Research, a national corporation with headquarters in

## Meningococcal disease facts:

- The disease strikes about 3,000 Americans each year, and is responsible for about 300 deaths annually.

- An estimated 100 to 125 cases of meningococcal disease occur on college campuses annually, killing 5 to 15 students each year.

SOURCE: American College Health Association.

Kirkland, Wash., is conducting the study at research sites across the country, spokeswoman Beth Katz said.

Those interested in participating in the Eugene study can call Radiant Research at 434-1003.

Kara Cogswell is a student activities reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. She can be reached at karacogswell@dailyemerald.com.

# McArthur Court: More than just a 'tough' basketball home court

■ McArthur Court has hosted more than just sporting events throughout its 75-year history

By Steven Neuman  
for the Emerald

McArthur Court, also known as Mac Court and "The Pit" to students, fans and players, is the University's ivy-coated home to men and women's basketball, women's volleyball and men's wrestling. It is also home to history and legends.

The arena is named for Clifton N. (Pat) McArthur, the University's first student body president and a student athlete, according to the University admissions office Web site. Built with student funds in 1926, McArthur Court was first the site of a game in 1927 when the Oregon Tall Firs, as the men's basketball team was then known, beat Willamette University, 38-10. In 1939, the Tall Firs were the first team to win the newly inaugurated NCAA Championship.

Originally designed to hold 6,000 fans, McArthur Court has been pro-

gressively expanded. It now seats 9,738 and is the oldest active basketball stadium in the country, according to the University admissions office Web site.

George Beres, the University's sports information director from 1976-82, recalled how the issue of seating once caused some internal controversy.

Part of Beres' job was to report attendance at the basketball games to the league. But a former basketball coach liked to pad the numbers a little, Beres said.

"(He) always insisted that we put down that the attendance at a sold-out game was 10,000. It looked better for him. It was only after (he) left for Penn State was I approached by (current associate athletic director) Herb Yamanaka and told that the attendance of a full game should be reported as 9,738. It was only then that I realized we could not actually fit 10,000 people," Beres said. Beres also remembered former men's basketball coach Dick Harter, who had an unusual defensive strategy called the "Kamikaze Kids." During games, the players

would go skidding around the floor diving after the ball, Beres said.

*On March 8, 1970, the band Chicago played at McArthur Court, but according to a March 10 Emerald article, things went sour when 200 people attempted to make the concert a free event, and some individuals broke windows and took doors off their hinges.*

Throughout its history, the court has also been renovated several times. In 1992, renovations added new locker rooms, a team room and coaches' offices, and in 1993, women's basketball volleyball and softball received new quarters. During the 1995-96 academic year, a

\$400,000 renovation of the outer concourse on the street level was completed, and the academic area for student athletes was completely updated and redesigned.

In the summer of 1996, the court received a new roof with a price tag of \$1.7 million, and in an attempt to make the space more usable for other events, new seating was put in place in fall 1997 at the court level and the first balcony.

The court has seen its share of non-sporting events. Sandy Walton, the senior associate athletic director, who came to the school in 1978, remembers Elvis Presley, Bob Hope, Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson and The Judds — with Garth Brooks as a warm-up band — performing at Mac Court.

On March 8, 1970, the band Chicago played at McArthur Court, but according to a March 10 Emerald article, things went sour when 200 people attempted to make the concert a free event, and some individuals broke windows and took doors off their hinges.

But despite the number of musical events the court has hosted, Walton

said it's not a great venue.

"The acoustics stink," she said. "I could imagine it would be terrible to have to play music there, but it's fantastic for basketball."

According to the Athletic Department, Mac Court is more than just a building — it is one of the primary attributes of Oregon's basketball program.

"It is just one of the most intimate places to play ball, just because the fans are so incredibly close to the players," Walton said.

In 1995, Sports Illustrated listed Mac Court as one of the 12 toughest places in the country to play college basketball. ESPN.com's panel of sports columnists rated it the worst place in the Pacific-10 Conference for a team to play an away game.

"The Ducks feast off noise from three balconies that vibrate from the deafening cheers of 10,000," the ESPN.com report said. "Students sitting at courtside only add to the roaring atmosphere."

Steven Neuman is a freelance reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald.

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