

Meningococcal Information

(This is a two-sided form)

College students are at increased risk for meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis. In fact, freshmen living in residence halls are found to have a six-fold increased risk for the disease. The American College Health Association, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommend that college students, particularly freshmen living in residence halls, learn more about meningitis and vaccination. At least 70% of all cases of meningococcal disease in college students are vaccine preventable.

Many states have passed legislation mandating the meningococcal vaccine for freshmen living in residence halls. In 2002, Pennsylvania enacted legislation (Senate Bill 95, the College and University Student Vaccination Act), requiring that all students who will be residing in university owned housing either confirm that they have received the vaccine or sign a declination statement after having received information concerning the benefits of receiving the meningitis vaccine.

- **What is meningococcal meningitis?** Meningitis is rare. But when it strikes, this potentially fatal bacterial disease can lead to swelling of fluid surrounding the brain and spinal column as well as severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, limb amputation and even death.
- **How is it spread?** Meningococcal meningitis is spread by direct contact with infected individuals (for example, sharing a glass or cigarette, or kissing) or prolonged close contact with respiratory secretions (for example, sleeping in the same room).
- **What are the symptoms?** Symptoms of meningococcal meningitis often resemble the flu and can include high fever, severe headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea, vomiting, lethargy and confusion.
- **Who is at risk?** Certain college students, particularly freshmen who live in residence halls, have been found to have an increased risk for meningococcal meningitis. Other university students 25 years of age or younger should also consider vaccination to reduce their risk for the disease.
- **Can meningitis be prevented?** Yes. A safe and effective vaccine is available to protect against four of the five most common strains of the disease. The vaccine provides protection for approximately three to five years. Adverse reactions to the meningitis vaccine are mild and infrequent, consisting primarily of redness and pain at the injection site and rarely a fever. As with any vaccine, vaccination against meningitis may not protect 100 percent of all susceptible individuals. It does not protect against viral meningitis.
- **For more information:** To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, we recommend the web site of the American College Health Association, www.acha.org/projects_programs/meningitis/index.cfm

Important: Students planning to live in campus housing must complete this form on-line at www.portal.lehigh.edu by June 25th. **Failure to comply will result in denial of access to your dorm room.** You must send us a hard copy only if you decline the vaccine.

PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENT THAT APPLIES AND SIGN:

- I have received the meningococcal vaccine. Date of vaccination _____.
- I will receive the meningococcal vaccine at home prior to arriving at Lehigh University, and provide documentation to the Health and Wellness Center.
- I wish to receive the meningococcal vaccine upon arrival on campus. The cost is \$110.00 and can be paid by cash, check, bursar bill or gold plus. Please contact the Health Center at 610-758-3870 to make an appointment to receive the vaccine.
- I have read and understand the information about meningococcal disease and I decline the meningitis vaccine at this time for religious, medical, or other reasons. I understand that if I decide in the future that I want the vaccine, I can receive it at the Student Health Center and be billed.

If you are under 18 years of age, and declining vaccination, you must review the meningococcal information with your parents or guardian.

Print Name

Signature of Student Date
(required if declining)

Lehigh ID Number Date of Birth

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date
(Required if student is less than 18 years old)