

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

INFORMATION ABOUT MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE AND WAIVER FORM

Meningococcal disease is a rare but potentially fatal bacterial infection, expressed as either meningitis (infection of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord) or meningococemia (bacteria in the blood). Meningococcal disease strikes about 3,000 Americans each year and is responsible for about 300 deaths annually.

Approximately 100 to 125 cases of meningococcal disease occur annually on college campuses and five to 15 students die as a result. Serotypes C, Y and W-125 cause a majority of cases in college students (65 percent). Research has shown that students residing in dormitories appear to be at higher risk for meningococcal disease than college students overall. Further research shows freshmen living in dormitories have a six times higher risk of meningococcal disease than college students overall.

Meningococcal vaccine provides protection against the most common strains of the disease, including serogroups A, C, Y and W-135. The duration of protection is approximately three to five years. The vaccine is very safe and adverse reactions are mild and infrequent, consisting primarily of redness and pain at the site of injection lasting up to two days.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that college freshmen (particularly those who live in dormitories or residence halls) be informed about meningococcal disease and the benefits of vaccination, and that students who wish to reduce their risk for meningococcal disease be immunized. Other undergraduate students who wish to reduce their risk for meningococcal disease may also choose to be vaccinated.

Under the terms of the College and University Student Vaccination Act, signed by Governor Schweiker in June 2002, students living in campus housing must be immunized against meningococcal disease or sign a waiver that they have received detailed information on the risks associated with meningococcal disease and the availability and the effectiveness of vaccine and that they choose not to be vaccinated.

Incoming undergraduate students living on Penn's campus must be immunized against meningococcal disease. Returning undergraduate students or graduate/professional students living in campus-owned housing must either be immunized against meningococcal disease or submit a waiver in accordance with the College and University Student Vaccination Act.

WAIVER

*I have read the above information about the risks of meningococcal disease and the benefits of immunization. I hereby attest that I am declining immunization at this time. **Incoming students may waive this requirement only if there is a medical contraindication to vaccination or if religious beliefs prohibit immunization.***

Signature

Student name (printed)

Signature of parent (if under 18)

Parents name (if under 18) (printed)

Social security number

Date

Please return this form Student Health Service, 3535 Market St. Suite St. Philadelphia PA 19104 or fax to 215-746-0909

Additional information about meningococcal disease and vaccine is available through the University of Pennsylvania Student Health Service (www.upenn.edu/shs) and the American College Health Association (www.acha.org).