

SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY

Meningitis Information

On June 28, 2002, Pennsylvania passed legislation (Senate Bill 955) requiring all students living in university residence halls/housing, to either have the vaccine or sign a declination statement after having received information concerning the benefits of receiving the meningitis vaccine.

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 recommends 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 recently passed legislation mandating the meningitis vaccine for freshmen living in residence halls. Pennsylvania has legislation (Senate Bill 995) stating all incoming freshmen either have 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 tissue 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 through the air via respiratory secretions or close contact with an infected person. This can include coughing, sneezing, kissing or sharing items like utensils, cigarettes and drinking glasses.
- ♦ **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 undergraduates should also consider vaccination to reduce their risk of 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. Serious reactions such as anaphylaxis and death are exceedingly rare from this type of vaccine. Those allergic to Thimerosal (a preservative) or latex (from the stopper) should not receive this vaccine. As with any vaccine, vaccination against meningitis may not protect 100 percent of all susceptible individuals. It does not protect against viral meningitis.

COMPLETE INFORMATION ON BACK

THIS DOCUMENT MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED
BEFORE OCCUPYING A RESIDENCE HALL. PLEASE MAIL
OR FAX USING THE INFORMATION BELOW:

ETTER HEALTH CENTER
SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY
1871 OLD MAIN DR
SHIPPENSBURG, PA 17257
(717) 477-1458
Fax (717) 477-4042

Last Name

First Name

SSN

I have received the meningitis vaccine, date _____ .

I wish to receive the meningitis/menactra vaccine at Franklin Science Center, Shippensburg University, August 21, 2008. The cost of the meningitis vaccine is \$125 (price and availability are subject to change). Payment is expected at time of service.

I have read and understand the information about meningitis, and **I decline** the meningitis vaccine at this time for the following reason(s)_____.

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Parent

Date

(required for students under 18 years of age)

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, visit the Etter Health Center or call (717) 477-1458. You can visit our website at www.ship.edu, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo, and the American College Health Association, www.acha.org.