

COLLEGE OF MOUNT SAINT VINCENT
HEALTH CENTER - SPELLMAN HALL
6301 RIVERDALE AVENUE
RIVERDALE, NEW YORK 10471

MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS VACCINATION
RESPONSE FORM

New York State Public Health Law requires that all college and university students enrolled for at least six (6) semester hours or the equivalent per semester, or at least four (4) semester hours per quarter, complete and return the following form to the College of Mount Saint Vincent Health Center at the above address. The law permits colleges to require students to complete this form regardless of the number of credits taken because it is important for all students to learn the facts about this serious disease and the vaccinations that are available.

Resident Students: You are required to have received the vaccine to live in the Dorm.

Commuters and Residents: Read the information, sign the form and return it to the Health Center.

All Students: Check only one box and sign below.

I have or for students under the age of 18: My child has:

had the meningococcal meningitis immunization: _____ Menomune™ within the past 10 years
OR _____ Menactra™ since March, 2005
Date received: _____ (Document date with Doctor note or copy of immunization record)

read or have had explained to me, the information regarding meningococcal meningitis disease. I or my child will obtain immunization against meningococcal meningitis **within 30 days** from my health care provider. The cost of the vaccine is approximately \$100.00. It may be covered by health insurance. Additional information about this disease may be found on the websites of the CDC and the National Meningitis Association (NMA) <http://www.nmaus.org>.

read, or have had explained to me, the information regarding meningococcal meningitis disease. I understand the risks of not receiving the vaccine. I have decided that I or my child will **not** obtain immunization against meningococcal meningitis disease.

Signed _____ Date _____
SIGNATURE REQUIRED of Student or Parent/Guardian **only if** student is under the age of 18

Print Student's name _____ Student _____ / /
Date of Birth _____ month day year
Student _____
Mailing Address _____ Student ID# _____

Fast Facts About Meningococcal Disease and Vaccination

Q. What is meningococcal disease and why is it so dangerous?

- A.** Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection. It can cause *meningitis*—severe swelling of the brain and spinal cord. It can also lead to *sepsis*—a potentially life-threatening infection of the blood.

Meningococcal disease is very dangerous because it often begins with symptoms that can be mistaken for influenza or another respiratory infection. But unlike more common infections, meningococcal disease can get worse very rapidly and it can kill an otherwise healthy young adult in as little as 24 to 48 hours.¹ In fact, 10%, and in some cases as many as 23%, of those who develop meningococcal disease may die.^{2,4} Of those who survive, 11% to 19% will suffer from permanent disabilities, including amputations, scarring, hearing loss, and brain damage.^{1,2}

Q. How is meningococcal disease spread?

- A.** The bacteria that causes meningococcal disease (*Neisseria meningitidis*) can be spread from person to person by droplets that are released in the air through coughing. It can also be spread by kissing or sharing a glass or eating utensils.⁵

Q. Who is at risk for meningococcal disease?

- A.** Although anyone can get meningococcal disease, the risk for getting this disease is higher for college students living on campus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), college freshmen living in dormitories have a 6-times greater chance of getting meningococcal disease compared with other college students.¹ Students who smoke, drink, or spend time in crowded bars on or near campus are also at higher risk.⁶

Q. What are the symptoms of meningococcal disease?

- A.** The early symptoms of meningococcal disease are similar to influenza. Many people complain of having a headache, fever, stiff neck, extreme fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and sensitivity to light. Some people also develop a purplish black-red rash of small dots (petechiae), mainly on their arms and legs.⁷ Remember, meningococcal disease can get worse very quickly, so recognizing the characteristic signs and symptoms of the disease is critical and potentially lifesaving.

Q. Will vaccination eliminate the risk of meningococcal disease?

- A.** Meningococcal vaccination can greatly reduce your risk of infection, but it will not completely eliminate it. The vaccine helps to protect against the strains of bacteria (*N meningitidis* A, C, Y, and W-135) that cause 68% to 83% of meningococcal disease in college-aged people.^{2,3,8} In the US military, meningococcal vaccination has been mandatory since the 1970s, and it has been associated with a 94% reduction in meningococcal disease among new recruits.⁹ Be aware, however, that the meningococcal vaccine does not protect against infection caused by strains other than A, C, Y, and W-135, and that no vaccine is guaranteed to protect 100% of susceptible individuals.

Q. Can I get meningococcal disease from the vaccine?

- A.** No. The vaccine does not contain any live bacteria—so it is impossible to get meningococcal disease from the vaccination. Additionally, the meningococcal vaccine is very well tolerated. The most common reactions after vaccination are mild ones, such as soreness or redness at the injection site for 1 or 2 days. A very small number of people may also experience headache, body aches, chills, and fever.² Vaccination should be avoided by persons with known hypersensitivity to any component of the vaccine. As with most vaccines, immunization should be delayed if you have any acute illness.²

Q. Who should be vaccinated against meningococcal disease?

- A.** College students, particularly freshmen living in dormitories, should consider vaccination to reduce their risk of getting meningococcal disease. This recommendation is supported by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the American College Health Association (ACHA), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).^{2,10,11}

In addition, 14 states have enacted legislation mandating distribution of information to students and their parents about the dangers of meningococcal disease and the availability of the meningococcal vaccine.^{*12-25} In 6 of these states, vaccination is *required* for incoming students who are planning to live on campus, unless they sign a waiver stating that they are aware of the risk and do not wish to be vaccinated.^{14-16,19,21,25}

*Legislation enacted as of November, 2002.