

MENINGITIS INFORMATION RESPONSE FORM

New York State Public Health Law requires all college students to learn about meningitis and be aware of the availability of the meningitis vaccine. While you are not required to receive this vaccine, we strongly urge you to read the full information regarding meningitis and to consider immunization.

New York State Public Health Law requires you to *select one* of the statements below **AND provide your signature:**

- I have received the immunization for meningitis within the past 10 years.
Date received: _____
- I have read or had explained to me the fact sheet enclosed regarding meningococcal disease and am declining the vaccine at this time. I am fully aware of the risks associated with this disease, and of the availability and effectiveness of the vaccine.

Signature of Student: _____ **Date:** _____
(Signature of parent/guardian if student is under 18 years of age)

Print Student's Name: _____

Birth Date: _____ / _____ / _____ Cell Phone: (_____) _____
Month Day Year

Permanent Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Please note failure to comply with this law will result in dismissal from the College.

Return the form by the first day of classes to:

MSMC – Health Services
330 Powell Avenue
Newburgh, NY 12550
Fax: (845) 569-3514

Meningococcal Disease Fact Sheet

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. It can lead to serious blood infections. When the linings of the brain and spinal cord become inflamed, it is called meningitis. The disease strikes quickly and can have serious complications including death. Anyone can get meningococcal disease. Some people are at higher risk. This disease occurs more often in people who are:

- Teenagers or young adults
- Infants younger than one year of age
- Living in crowded settings like college dormitories or military barracks
- Traveling to areas outside of the United States, such as the "meningitis belt" in Africa
- Living with a damaged spleen or no spleen
- Being treated with Soliris® or who have complement component deficiency (an inherited immune disorder)
- Exposed during an outbreak
- Working with meningococcal bacteria in a laboratory

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms appear suddenly – usually 3 to 4 days after a person is infected. It can take up to 10 days to develop symptoms. Symptoms may include:

- A sudden high fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck (meningitis)
- Nausea and vomiting
- Red-purple skin rash
- Weakness and feeling very ill
- Eyes sensitive to light

How is meningococcal disease spread?

It spreads from person-to-person by coughing or coming into close or lengthy contact with someone who is sick or who carries the bacteria. Contact includes kissing, sharing drinks, or living together. Up to one in 10 people carry meningococcal bacteria in their nose or throat without getting sick.

Is there treatment?

Early diagnosis of meningococcal disease is very important. If it is caught early, meningococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics. But, sometimes the infection has caused too much damage for antibiotics to prevent death or serious long-term problems. Most people need to be cared for in a hospital due to serious, life-threatening infections.

What are the complications?

Ten to 15 percent of those who get meningococcal disease die. Among survivors, as many as one in five will have permanent disabilities. Complications include:

- Hearing loss
- Brain damage
- Kidney damage
- Limb amputations

What should I do if I or someone I love is exposed?

If you are in close contact with a person with meningococcal disease, talk with your health care provider about the risk to you and your family. They can prescribe an antibiotic to prevent the disease.

What is the best way to prevent meningococcal disease?

The single best way to prevent this disease is to be vaccinated. Vaccines are available for people 6 weeks of age and older. Various vaccines offer protection against the five major strains of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease:

- All teenagers should receive two doses of vaccine against strains A, C, W and Y. The first dose is given at 11 to 12 years of age and the second dose (booster) at age 16.
 - It is very important that teens receive the booster dose at age 16 in order to protect them through the years when they are at greatest risk of meningococcal disease.
 - Talk to your health care provider today if your teen has not received two doses of vaccine against meningococcal strains A, C, W and Y.
- Teens and young adults can also be vaccinated against the "B" strain. Talk to your health care provider about whether they recommend vaccine against the "B" strain.

Others who should receive the vaccine include:

- Infants, children and adults with certain medical conditions
- First-year college students through 21 years of age living in residential housing
- People exposed during an outbreak
- Travelers to the "meningitis belt" of Sub-Saharan Africa
- Military recruits

Please speak with your health care provider if you may be at increased risk.

What are the meningococcal vaccine requirements for school attendance?

As of September 1, 2016, children entering grades 7 and 12 must be immunized against meningococcal disease strains A, C, W and Y according to the recommendations listed above.

Is there an increased risk for meningococcal disease if I travel

- Meningococcal disease and outbreaks occur in the United States and around the world. The disease is more common in the "meningitis belt" of sub-Saharan Africa. The risk is highest in people who visit

these countries and who have prolonged contact with local populations during an epidemic.

- To reduce your risk of illness, wash your hands often, maintain healthy habits such as getting plenty of rest and try not to come into contact with people who are sick.

Additional Information

- [Travel and meningococcal disease](#)
- [Learn more about meningococcal disease \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [More information about vaccine-preventable diseases](#)

Source: New York State Department of Health, February 2016