

Meningococcal Vaccine WAIVER

Effective in 2001, Maryland law requires that individuals enrolled in institutions of higher education residing in on-campus student housing be vaccinated against meningococcal disease, specifically serotypes A, C, Y, and W-125. Individuals may request an exemption from the meningococcal vaccination requirement if they (or a parent/guardian if under 18 years) present to the institution of higher education a signed written waiver stating that the individual received and reviewed information regarding the risks associated with meningococcal disease, along with the availability and effectiveness of the vaccine.

MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

Meningococcal disease is a rare but life-threatening illness caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis*. It is a leading cause of bacterial meningitis (infection of the brain and spinal cord covering) in the United States. The most severe form of the disease is meningococcemia, or sepsis, which is an infection in the bloodstream caused by this bacterium. Students residing in dormitory settings are at increased risk due to the proximity to each other and the sharing of common items such as straws, water bottles, and lip balm, which makes person-to-person spread of the infected respiratory secretions more likely. Unfortunately, 1 in 10 people who become infected will die, often within 24 hours of symptoms. Of those who survive, 1 in 5 will have long-term consequences, including brain damage, hearing loss, and loss of limbs. The Maryland Department of Health, therefore, highly encourages compliance with meningococcal vaccination of all higher education students residing on campus.

To learn more about meningococcal disease, talk to your healthcare provider and visit:

[Maryland Department of Health: Meningococcal Disease Fact Sheet](#)

[CDC: Meningitis Disease and Prevention](#)

ABOUT THE VACCINE

The meningococcal vaccine is effective in preventing meningococcal disease. The vaccine is not effective in preventing all types of disease, but it does help to protect people who might become sick if they do not get the vaccine. A vaccine, like any medicine, can cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. People should not get the meningococcal vaccine if they have ever had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of the meningococcal vaccine. Some people who get the meningococcal vaccine have mild side effects, such as redness or pain where the shot was given. A small percentage of people who receive the vaccine develop a fever. The vaccine may be given to pregnant women.

To learn more about the meningococcal vaccine, talk to your healthcare provider and visit:

[CDC: Meningitis Vaccine](#)

[Immunize.org](#)

AVAILABILITY OF VACCINE

The meningococcal vaccine is available locally at the [St. Mary's County Health Department](#). Students interested in receiving the vaccination should check for availability with their primary care clinicians, local pharmacies, and health departments in their areas before arriving on campus.

Individuals 18 years of age and older may sign a written waiver choosing not to be vaccinated against meningococcal disease after reviewing the information on the risks of meningococcal disease, the availability of the vaccine, and the effectiveness of the vaccine. *Paper copies of the information contained within the hyperlinks will be provided to you upon request.*

For individuals 18 years of age or older:

I am 18 years of age or older **OR** I am emancipated as deemed by [Maryland Minor Consent Laws](#). I have reviewed the information provided on the risk of meningococcal disease, and the effectiveness and availability of meningococcal vaccine. I understand that meningococcal disease is a rare but life-threatening illness. I understand that Maryland law requires that an individual enrolled in an institution of higher education residing in student housing on campus be vaccinated against meningococcal disease unless a waiver is signed.

I choose to not be vaccinated and waive receipt of the meningococcal vaccine at this time.

Print Legal Name

Signature

Student ID #

Date

For individuals under 18 years of age, the parent or guardian of the individual must review the information on the risks of meningococcal disease, the availability of the vaccine, the effectiveness of the vaccine, and sign a written waiver that they have chosen not to vaccinate the minor against meningococcal disease. *Hard copies of the information contained within the hyperlinks will be provided to you upon request.*

For individuals under the age of 18 years:

I am the parent or legal guardian of a residential student at SMCM who is younger than the age of 18 years of age. I have reviewed the information provided with my student regarding the risk of meningococcal disease and the effectiveness and availability of the meningococcal vaccine. I understand that meningococcal disease is a rare but life-threatening illness. I understand that Maryland law requires that an individual enrolled in an institution of higher education, residing in student housing on campus, be vaccinated against meningococcal disease unless a waiver is signed.

As the legal parent or guardian of an individual under the age of 18 years, I am choosing to waive receipt of the meningococcal vaccine currently.

Print Legal Name of Parent/Guardian

Signature

Relationship

Minor's Legal Name

Student ID#

Date