

HEALTH SERVICES

MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINATION REQUIREMENT Academic Year 26/27

Fall admission due: August 1

Spring admission due: January 1

Since 2001, Maryland law requires individuals enrolled in institutions of higher education who reside in on-campus housing to be vaccinated against meningococcal disease (serogroups A, C, Y, and W-135).

An individual may request an exemption from this requirement by submitting a signed written waiver to the institution. The waiver must confirm that the individual (or parent/guardian, if under 18) has received and reviewed information regarding the risks of meningococcal disease and the availability and effectiveness of the vaccine.

For more information about this legislation, visit: [Health-General § 18-102](#)

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 coverings) in the United States. If left untreated, bacterial meningitis can rapidly progress, resulting in meningococemia (bloodstream infection).

Students living in residence halls are at increased risk due to close contact and the sharing of personal items such as drinks, utensils, and lip products, which can spread infected respiratory secretions.

Approximately 1 in 10 individuals who contract meningococcal disease will die, often within 24 hours of symptom onset. Among survivors, about 1 in 5 may experience serious long-term complications, including brain damage, hearing loss, or limb loss.

For more information about meningococcal disease, talk to your healthcare provider and visit: [CDC: Meningitis Disease and Prevention](#)

ABOUT THE VACCINE

The meningococcal vaccine is effective in preventing several types of meningococcal disease, though it does not protect against all strains. Like any medication, vaccines can carry risks, including rare but serious allergic reactions.

Individuals should not receive the vaccine if they have had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose. Common side effects are typically mild and may include redness or pain at the injection site; a small percentage of individuals may develop a fever. The vaccine may be administered during pregnancy when appropriate.

For more information, talk to your healthcare provider and visit: [CDC: Meningitis Vaccine](#)

AVAILABILITY OF VACCINE

The meningococcal vaccine is available through primary care clinicians, local pharmacies, vaccine clinics, and health departments, including the [St. Mary's County Health Department](#).

STUDENT WAIVER (Age 18 or Older / Emancipated Minor)

Individuals 18 years of age and older may sign a written waiver to decline meningococcal vaccination after reviewing information regarding the risks of meningococcal disease, as well as the availability and effectiveness of the vaccine. Paper copies of the information referenced in the hyperlinks are available upon request.

For individuals 18 years of age or older:

I certify that I am 18 years of age or older, or that I am emancipated as defined by [Maryland Minor Consent Laws](#). I have reviewed the information provided regarding the risks of meningococcal disease, as well as the availability and effectiveness of the meningococcal vaccine. I understand that meningococcal disease is a rare but potentially life-threatening illness.

I further understand that Maryland law requires individuals enrolled in an institution of higher education who reside in on-campus student housing be vaccinated against meningococcal disease unless a waiver is submitted.

Print Legal Name

Signature

Student ID #

Date

PARENT/GUARDIAN WAIVER (Student Under Age 18)

For individuals under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian must review information regarding the risks of meningococcal disease, as well as the availability and effectiveness of the vaccine, and sign a written waiver indicating their decision not to vaccinate the minor. Paper copies of the information referenced in the hyperlinks are available upon request.

For individuals under the age of 18 years:

I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of a residential student at St. Mary's College of Maryland who is under 18 years of age. I have reviewed the information provided with my student regarding the risks of meningococcal disease, as well as the availability and effectiveness of the meningococcal vaccine. I understand that meningococcal disease is a rare but potentially life-threatening illness.

I further understand that Maryland law requires individuals enrolled in an institution of higher education who reside in on-campus student housing be vaccinated against meningococcal disease unless a waiver is submitted.

Print Legal Name of Parent/Guardian

Signature

Relationship

Minor's Legal Name

Student ID#

Date