

# Meningococcal Information Form

College students are at increased risk for meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as *Meningitis*. In fact, first year students living in residence halls are found to have a six-fold increased risk for the disease. The American College Health Association (ACHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP of the CDC) recommend that college students, particularly first year students living in residence halls, learn more about Meningitis and the vaccine. At least 70% of all cases of meningococcal disease in college students are vaccine preventable.

Pennsylvania has enacted legislation (Senate Bill 95, the College and University Student Vaccination Act) requiring all students who will be residing in university owned housing provide documentation that they have received the vaccine or sign a declination statement after receiving information regarding the benefits of the meningitis vaccine. The Lehigh University Health and Wellness Center and Residential Services are committed to upholding this law; students not in compliance will not receive room keys on Move-in Day.

**What is meningococcal meningitis?** Bacterial meningitis is rare. When it strikes, however, this potentially fatal bacterial disease can lead to swelling of fluid 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 by direct contact with infected individuals (for example, sharing food, drinks or cigarettes and kissing) or prolonged close contact with respiratory secretions (for example, sleeping in the same room).

**What are the symptoms?** Symptoms of meningococcal meningitis often resemble the flu and can include high fever, headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea, vomiting, lethargy and confusion.

**Who is at risk?** Certain college students, particularly first year students who live in residence halls, have been found to have an increased risk for meningococcal meningitis.

**What should I know about the vaccine?** This safe and effective vaccine is available to protect against four of the five most common strains of the disease and lasts approximately up to five years.

The CDC recommends vaccination up through age 21 years for those living in residence halls. Students who received their first shot before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday require a 2<sup>nd</sup> (booster) shot. Those who choose not to do so must sign a waiver to be in compliance and receive a room key.

Adverse reactions to the meningitis vaccine are mild and infrequent, consisting primarily of redness and pain at the injection site and rarely a fever. As with any vaccine, vaccination against meningitis may not protect 100 percent of all susceptible individuals. It does not protect against viral meningitis.

**Students planning to live in campus housing who either:**

- **decline the meningitis vaccine *OR***
- **wish to receive the vaccine on Undergraduate Move-In Day or at Graduate Student Orientation *OR***
- **have received only a single meningitis vaccine before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday**

**MUST complete and return this form by June 30<sup>th</sup>. You will NOT be given your room key on Move-In Day if you fail to comply.**

**PLEASE PRINT, SIGN AND MAIL THIS FORM TO THE LEHIGH UNIVERSITY HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTER**

PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENT THAT APPLIES:

- I wish to receive the meningitis vaccine* as administered by the Lehigh University Health & Wellness Center. The cost of the vaccine is \$110.00 and can be paid by Cash, Check or Bursar Bill. By checking this box, I am requesting that the Health & Wellness Center reserve a dose for me.
  - I am an undergraduate student and would like to receive the vaccine on Move-In Day
  - I am a graduate student and wish to receive the vaccine during Graduate Student Orientation
- I have read and understand the information about meningococcal disease and *I decline the meningitis vaccine* at this time for religious or other reasons. I understand that if I decide to receive the vaccine in the future, I can contact the Health & Wellness Center.
  - Religious
  - Other
- Even though I have already been vaccinated with the meningococcal vaccination, I understand that I am not in compliance with the new recommendations from the CDC and *I decline the meningitis vaccine* at this time.

\*If you are under 18 years of age and declining vaccination, your parent/guardian must review the meningococcal information and sign as well.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lehigh ID Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*(Required if student is less than 18 years old)*

Return to:

Lehigh University Health & Wellness Center  
36 University Drive  
Bethlehem, PA 18015  
P 610.758.3870  
F 610.758.5833