

University Health Center

Meningitis Vaccination Form



All students must fill out Section A and either Section B (Certification) or Section C (Waiver). If you do not return the form, or you return it with incomplete information, you will not be permitted to move into your University-owned or operated residence hall or housing unit.

Student Name (Print): _____

Social Security Number: _____ **Year in School:** _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

PHYSICIAN CERTIFICATION OF MENINGITIS VACCINE

The above-named individual received the meningitis vaccine on ____/____/____ (month/day/year)

Signed: _____ **MD/DO** **Date:** _____

Print Name: _____

WAIVER

FOR STUDENTS AGES 18 AND ABOVE:

I have received and reviewed the information sent to me by Cairn about the risks associated with meningitis and the availability and effectiveness of a vaccine against this disease. I have chosen not to be vaccinated, for religious or other reasons.

Student's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 18:

I have received and reviewed the information sent to me by Cairn about the risks associated with meningitis and the availability and effectiveness of a vaccine against this disease. I have chosen for the above-named student not to be vaccinated, for religious or other reasons.

Parent or Guardian's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Each student must return this form to Cairn before moving into the residence halls.

MAIL TO:

University Health Center
Cairn University
200 Manor Avenue
Langhorne, PA 19047

OR:

Bring this form with you upon your arrival to Cairn and return it to the Student Health Center before you move into your residence hall.

Frequently Asked Questions about Meningitis

Q: WHAT IS MENINGITIS AND MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS?

A: Meningitis, often referred to as spinal meningitis by the general public, is an infection of the layers of tissue, which cover the brain and spinal cord. It may be caused by many different germs. It is generally a very serious illness, which can result in blindness, deafness, amputations, permanent brain damage, or even death. However, with proper treatment, many people recover fully.

Meningococcal meningitis is a particularly severe form of meningitis caused by the bacteria *Neisseria meningitides*. Even when treated with the right antibiotics, about 10-20% of people with this illness die, often within hours of the onset of the first signs of illness.

Q: WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF MENINGITIS?

A: Symptoms for meningitis (for adults) may include:

- Fever
- Severe Headache
- Stiffness of the neck
- Nausea and maybe vomiting
- A skin rash that looks like small, purplish red dots

Persons with meningitis may also be confused or very drowsy; sometimes they may even go into a coma, which they cannot be awakened from. Getting early medical advice when a person has a fever, stiff neck and headache, especially when meningitis has been reported in the community, can be lifesaving.

Q: WHY SHOULD COLLEGE STUDENTS BE CONCERNED ABOUT MENINGITIS?

A: Meningitis is increasing among college students. The number of cases among the 15-24 year-old groups doubled between 1991-1997, from 308 to 600 cases per year. College freshman living in residence halls are up to 4 times more likely to develop this illness than the general population. Investigations of previous college outbreaks suggest that lifestyle behaviors among college students may be related to the occurrence of these cases.

Q: CAN MENINGITIS BE PREVENTED?

A: A vaccine is now available which can help protect individuals from meningitis. The centers for Disease Control (CDC), the American College Health Association (ACHA), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend that parents and students be advised of the availability of this vaccine and that students should be encouraged to consider receiving it.

Q: I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS. WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

A: The following are sources of Information:

- Your family doctor can give you more information about the meningitis vaccine.
- Internet sources:
 - Meningitis Foundation of America – www.musa.org
 - American College Health Association – <http://www.acha.org/TopIcs/menIngItIs.dm>
- If you have additional questions, please call the University Health Center at (215) 702-4334.

College Students Required to Receive Meningitis Shot

By Joann Loviglio

The Associated Press; July 2002

PHILADELPHIA – College students in Pennsylvania who live in dormitories must now consider adding another item to their to-do list before heading to school this fall: Get a meningitis shot.

Under a measure signed into law by Gov. Mark Schweiker, undergraduate students moving into on-campus housing must be vaccinated against meningitis unless they sign a waiver stating they have some "religious or other" obligation.

The legislation is worded so that any student who doesn't want the vaccination, for whatever reason, will not be running afoul of the law as long as they complete an "opt out" form stating that they received information from the college or university regarding the benefits of the immunization.

Meningococcal meningitis is a bacterial infection of membranes around the brain and spinal cord that can be spread by kissing or sharing utensils. Symptoms include fever, neck stiffness and headache. The disease kills in roughly 10 percent of cases and does serious harm, including brain damage, in another 10 percent. A viral form of meningitis exists but is generally less serious.

The Centers for Disease Control and the American College Health Association have stopped short of recommending mandatory meningitis immunization but urge students and parents to be advised of the risk of meningococcal disease and be offered the vaccine.

Health officials at some schools were rushing to get in compliance with Pennsylvania's law, which takes effect Aug. 23, 2002.

"The lead time is far less than what we would have hoped for," said Dr. Margaret Spear, director of university health services at Penn State, which needs to get the word out to 13,000 students that they need to get immunized or send in a waiver form.

"If they do neither, the law says they can't move into their dormitories," Spear said.