

Meningitis Information

In 2002, Pennsylvania passed a law **requiring** ALL students residing in a residence hall in the Commonwealth to receive a vaccination for meningococcal meningitis or to sign a waiver acknowledging they have been informed about meningitis including the risks associated with meningococcal disease. Prior to signing the waiver, it is important to understand that vaccination is *the* most effective way to prevent contracting the disease.

Students living in residence halls at The University of Scranton MUST be in compliance with Pennsylvania law!

BACTERIAL MENINGITIS FACT SHEET AND COMPLIANCE FORMS

Meningococcal disease is a rare but potentially fatal bacterial infection. The disease spreads quickly and can cause organ failure, brain damage, amputations of limbs or death within hours. First-year students living in residence halls are up to six times more likely to get the disease than other people.

Meningococcal meningitis is often misdiagnosed because early symptoms mimic those of the flu. The disease is spread through air droplets and direct contact with someone who is infected. That includes but is not limited to: kissing, coughing, sharing cigarettes, utensils, cups or lip balm. Social behaviors such as exposure to active and passive smoking, bar patronage and excessive alcohol consumption may increase risk of contracting the disease.

Vaccination can prevent up to 80 percent of meningococcal meningitis in young adults.

MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINATION

Meningococcal meningitis vaccines are available to help protect against the types of meningococcal disease that are commonly seen in the United States, but they will not prevent all cases. There are three kinds of meningococcal vaccines available in the US:

Meningococcal conjugate vaccines (Menactra, Menhibrix and Meneveo)

Meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine (Menomune)

Serogroup B meningococcal vaccines (Baxsero and Trumenba)

Meningococcal meningitis vaccine is recommended for all preteen and teens and is **REQUIRED for residential students at Pennsylvania colleges.**

Teens and young adults **MAY** also be vaccinated with serogroup B meningococcal vaccine. The Pennsylvania meningitis laws were enacted before serogroup B meningococcal vaccine became available and is not mandatory as part of the law. We recommend further discussion and consultation with your health care provider regarding this additional vaccine.

All college students regardless of living situation may benefit from and should consider vaccination as well.

Consult your health care provider or Student Health Services at the University of Scranton for more information about meningitis and how to obtain the vaccine.

For more information you may also reference:

American College Health Association at www.acha.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/index.html

National Meningitis Association at www.nmaus.org

Pennsylvania Department of Health at www.health.pa.gov

Provide verification of meningococcal meningitis immunization compliance by uploading your complete immunization records. If you are declining this vaccine, complete and sign the waiver below and upload to your Student Health Portal.

Meningitis Waiver

I have read the enclosed information about Meningococcal Meningitis vaccine; however, I decline the vaccine at this time. I understand declining this vaccine may place me at risk for contracting this serious disease. I further understand I may change my mind in the future and may seek assistance from Student Health Services or another health provider to obtain the vaccine.

If student is under the age of 18, parental consent is necessary.

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature (If student is under 18)

Date

References:

www.CDC.gov

www.health.pa.gov

www.nmaus.org

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STUDENT LIFE

Student Health Services

www.scranton.edu/studenthealthservices

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