

MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINE WAIVER FORM

A few years ago, research by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) found that students appear to be at higher risk for meningococcal disease than college students overall. The College and University Student Vaccination Act has been in effect in many states since. It states that all students residing in campus housing receive a one-time vaccination against meningococcal disease **or** sign a waiver for religious or other reasons after they have been provided with information on the risks associated with the disease and the effectiveness of the vaccine. Given the seriousness of meningococcal disease, Wheeling Jesuit University strongly recommends that all students receive a vaccination against this meningitis, regardless of their residential status. Any student choosing not to receive this vaccination must sign this waiver indicating that they understand the risks associated with meningococcal disease and the availability and effectiveness of the vaccine. If a student is a minor, the students' parents also must sign this waiver.

What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an infection of the fluid of a person's spinal cord and the fluid that surrounds the brain. People sometimes refer to it as spinal meningitis. Meningitis is usually caused by a viral or bacterial infection. Knowing whether meningitis is caused by a virus or bacterium is important because the severity of illness and the treatment differ. Viral meningitis is generally less severe and resolves without specific treatment, while bacterial meningitis can be quite severe and may result in brain damage, hearing loss, or learning disability. For bacterial meningitis, it is also important to know which type of bacteria is causing the meningitis because antibiotics can prevent some types from spreading and infecting other people. Before the 1990s, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) was the leading cause of bacterial meningitis, but new vaccines being given to all children as part of their routine immunizations have reduced the occurrence of invasive disease due to *H. influenzae*. Today, *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Neisseria meningitidis* are the leading causes of bacterial meningitis. This information has been taken from the Center for Disease Control website. We encourage students to visit < <http://www.cdc.gov/>> to receive more information about meningitis before signing this waiver.

STUDENT RELEASE UPON REFUSAL OF IMMUNIZATION AGAINST MENINGITIS

I understand that it is recommended that all university students receive the vaccination against meningococcal disease. I understand that by declining this vaccine, I continue to be at risk of acquiring meningitis, a serious disease. I, also, understand that the majority of clinical placement sites are requiring evidence of meningococcal disease immunity before accepting health science students for clinical practice and I acknowledge that, if I do not have evidence of this immunity, my placement for clinical practice may be affected (if applicable).

Despite the risks described above, I request that my refusal be honored, and I hereby release Wheeling Jesuit University, its officers, trustees, employees and agents as well as any clinical agency in which I practice due to any student role from any and all liability that may arise directly or indirectly as a result of my refusal of the meningococcal disease vaccine.

I _____ refuse immunization against meningitis.

(Print name)

(Signature of student. Signature of parent/guardian is required if student is under age 18.)

(Date)

Please return with your completed health form to the Office of Enrollment.