

**AMERICAN ACADEMY McALLISTER
INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE, INC.**



1501 Broadway, Suite 1102 - NEW YORK, NY 10036 (212) 757-1190 (866) 932-2264 FAX: (212) 765-5923

email: info@aami.edu web: www.aami.edu

Dear Prospective Student/Parent:

I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis. New York State Public Health Law (NYS PHL) §2167 requires institutions, including colleges and universities, to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccine to all students meeting the enrollment criteria, whether they live on or off campus.

The American Academy McAllister Institute of Funeral Service is required to maintain documentation of each of the following for each student:

- A response to receipt of meningococcal disease and vaccine information signed by the student or student's parent or guardian

AND EITHER

- A record of meningococcal immunization within the past 5 years; OR
- An acknowledgement of meningococcal disease risks and refusal of meningococcal immunization signed by the student or student's parent or guardian.

Meningococcal disease is rare. However, when it strikes, its flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult. Meningococcal disease can cause serious illnesses such as infection of the lining of the brain and spinal column (meningitis) or blood infections (sepsis). The disease strikes quickly and can lead to severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, limb amputation and even lead to death.

Meningococcal disease can be easily spread from person-to-person by coughing, sharing beverages or eating utensils, kissing, or spending time in close contact with someone who is sick or who carries the bacteria. People can spread the bacteria that causes meningococcal disease even before they know they are sick. There have been several outbreaks of meningococcal disease at college campuses across the United States.

The single best way to prevent meningococcal disease is to be vaccinated. The meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY) vaccine protects against four major strains of bacteria which cause about two-thirds of meningococcal disease in the United States (U.S.). The MenACWY vaccine is recommended for all U.S. teenagers and young adults up to age 21 years. Protection from the MenACWY vaccine is estimated to last about 3 to 5 years, so young adults who received the MenACWY vaccine before their 16th birthday should get a booster dose before entering college. The meningococcal B (MenB) vaccine protects against a fifth type of meningococcal disease, which accounts for about one-third of cases in the U.S. Young adults aged 16 through 23 years may choose to receive the MenB vaccine series. They should discuss the MenB vaccine with a healthcare provider.

(continued on reverse)

All private insurance plans not grandfathered under the Affordable Care Act are required to cover the cost of MenACWY and MenB vaccines. Contact your health insurance plan to determine whether it covers MenACWY and MenB vaccines. The federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) and NYS Vaccines for Adults (VFA) programs will cover both MenACWY and MenB vaccines for children and adults who have no health insurance or whose health insurance does not cover these vaccines, as well as for children less than 19 years of age who are American Indian or Alaska Native or eligible for Medicaid or Child Health Plus.

A vaccine is available to protect you against the four types of bacteria that cause meningitis in the United States. The average cost of the vaccination is \$100 to \$150. I encourage you to contact your personal physician about being vaccinated.

Please carefully review the attached Meningococcal Disease Fact Sheet. It is also available on the New York State Department of Health website at www.health.ny.gov/publications/2168.pdf. **Please complete the Meningococcal Vaccination Response Form and return it to:**

AAMI
1501 Broadway, 11th Floor, Suite 1102
New York, NY 10036
Fax: 212-765-5923
Email: info@aami.edu

You can also find information about the disease on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/.

I urge you to review the enclosed documents carefully. Kindly complete the meningococcal meningitis response form and return it to AAMI at your earliest convenience. Please note the response form must be returned to us no later than 30 days after you start classes. Failure to comply, may lead to disciplinary action taken against you.

Sincerely,

Tracy Lentz
Program Director

Attachment: [New York State Department of Health Meningococcal Disease Fact Sheet](#)

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New York State Public Health Law requires that all college and university students enrolled for at least six (6) semester hours or the equivalent per semester, or at least four (4) semester hours per quarter, complete and return the following form to American Academy McAllister Institute of Funeral Service.

Check one box and sign below.

I have (for students under the age of 18: My child has):

- had meningococcal immunization within the past 5 years. The vaccine record is attached.

[Note: The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends that all first-year college students up to age 21 years should have at least 1 dose of Meningococcal ACWY vaccine not more than 5 years before enrollment, preferably on or after their 16th birthday, and that young adults aged 16 through 23 years may choose to receive the Meningococcal B vaccine series. College and university students should discuss the Meningococcal B vaccine with a healthcare provider.]

- read, or have had explained to me, the information regarding meningococcal disease. I (my child) will obtain immunization against meningococcal disease **within 30 days** from my private health care provider
- read, or have had explained to me, the information regarding meningococcal disease. I understand the risks of not receiving the vaccine. I have decided that I (my child) will **not** obtain immunization against meningococcal disease.

Signed _____ Date _____
(Parent / Guardian if student is a minor)

Print
Student's name _____ Student _____ / ____ / ____
Date of Birth _____
Student
E-mail address _____ Student ID# _____

Student
Mailing Address _____

Student
Phone number _____ (_____) _____



Meningococcal Disease

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. It can lead to serious blood infections. When the linings of the brain and spinal cord become infected, it is called meningitis. The disease strikes quickly and can have serious complications, including death.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease. Some people are at higher risk. This disease occurs more often in people who are:

- Teenagers or young adults
- Infants younger than one year of age
- Living in crowded settings, such as college dormitories or military barracks
- Traveling to areas outside of the United States, such as the “meningitis belt” in Africa
- Living with a damaged spleen or no spleen or have sickle cell disease
- Being treated with the medication Soliris® or, who have complement component deficiency (an inherited immune disorder)
- Exposed during an outbreak
- Working with meningococcal bacteria in a laboratory

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms appear suddenly – usually 3 to 4 days after a person is infected. It can take up to 10 days to develop symptoms.

Symptoms may include:

- A sudden high fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck (meningitis)
- Nausea and vomiting
- Red-purple skin rash
- Weakness and feeling very ill
- Eyes sensitive to light

How is meningococcal disease spread?

It spreads from person-to-person by coughing or coming into close or lengthy contact with someone who is sick or who carries the bacteria. Contact includes kissing, sharing drinks, or living together. Up to one in 10 people carry meningococcal bacteria in their nose or throat without getting sick.

Is there treatment?

Early diagnosis of meningococcal disease is very important. If it is caught early, meningococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics. But, sometimes the infection has caused too much damage for antibiotics to prevent death or serious long-term problems. Most people need to be cared for in a hospital due to serious, life-threatening infections.

What are the complications?

Ten to fifteen percent of those who get meningococcal disease die. Among survivors, as many as one in five will have permanent disabilities. Complications include:

- Hearing loss
- Brain damage
- Kidney damage
- Limb amputations

What should I do if I or someone I love is exposed?

If you are in close contact with a person with meningococcal disease, talk with your healthcare provider about the risk to you and your family. They can prescribe an antibiotic to prevent the disease.

What is the best way to prevent meningococcal disease?

The single best way to prevent this disease is to be vaccinated. Vaccines are available for people 6 weeks of age and older. Various vaccines offer protection against the five major strains of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease:

- All teenagers should receive two doses of vaccine against strains A, C, W and Y, also known as MenACWY or MCV4 vaccine. The first dose is given at 11 to 12 years of age, and the second dose (booster) at 16 years.
 - It is very important that teens receive the booster dose at age 16 years in order to protect them through the years when they are at greatest risk of meningococcal disease.
- Teens and young adults can also be vaccinated against the “B” strain, also known as MenB vaccine. Talk to your healthcare provider about whether they recommend vaccine against the “B” strain.
- Others who should receive meningococcal vaccines include:
 - Infants, children and adults with certain medical conditions
 - People exposed during an outbreak
 - Travelers to the “meningitis belt” of sub-Saharan Africa
 - Military recruits
- Please speak with your healthcare provider if you may be at increased risk.

Who should not be vaccinated?

Some people should not get meningococcal vaccine or they should wait.

- Tell your doctor if you have any severe allergies. Anyone who has ever had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of meningococcal vaccine should not get another dose of the vaccine.
- Anyone who has a severe allergy to any component in the vaccine should not get the vaccine.
- Anyone who is moderately or severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled should probably wait until they are better. People with a mild illness can usually get the vaccine.

What are the meningococcal vaccine requirements for school attendance?

- For grades 7 through 9 in school year 2018-19: one dose of MenACWY vaccine. With each new school year, this requirement will move up a grade until students in grades 7 through 11 will all be required to have one dose of MenACWY vaccine to attend school.
 - 2019-20: grades 7, 8, 9, and 10
 - 2020-21 and later years: grades 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11

- For grade 12: two doses of MenACWY vaccine
 - The second dose needs to be given on or after the 16Teens who received their first dose on or after their 16th birthday. birthday do not need another dose.

Additional Resources:

- [Meningococcal Disease – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [Meningococcal Vaccination – CDC](#)
- [Meningococcal ACIP Vaccine Recommendations](#)
- [Travel and Meningococcal Disease](#)
- [Information about Vaccine-Preventable Diseases](#)