

**SUNY NIAGARA**  
**HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTER**  
**3111 SAUNDERS SETTLEMENT ROAD**  
**SANBORN, NY 14132**  
**PHONE: (716) 614-6275 FAX: (716) 614-6817**  
**MENINGITIS VACCINATION RESPONSE FORM**

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID # @ \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip Code

**What is meningitis?** Meningitis is a bacterial or viral infection of the bloodstream or meninges (a thin lining covering the brain and spinal cord). Knowing whether meningitis is caused by a virus or bacterium is important because of the severity of illness and the treatments differ. Meningococcal disease is caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis* which has at least 13 different subtypes. It is a relatively rare disease and usually occurs as a single isolated event. Clusters of cases or outbreaks are rare in the U.S., however **10-15%** of people who get meningitis **die** from the disease. Among the survivors, approximately **1 in 5 live with permanent disabilities**, such as brain damage, hearing loss, loss of kidney function, or limb amputations.

**How is the disease spread?** Meningococcal disease is transmitted through the air via droplets of respiratory secretions and direct contact. The disease is spread person-to-person through exchange of respiratory and throat secretions (i.e. shared items such as cigarettes, drinking glasses, eating utensils, or through intimate contact such as kissing). Although anyone can come in contact with the bacteria that causes this disease, data also indicates certain social behaviors may put students at increased risk for the disease. Patients with respiratory infections, compromised immunity, those in close contact to a known case, and travelers to endemic areas of the world are also at increased risk.

**What are the symptoms?** The early symptoms usually associated with meningococcal disease include fever, severe headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea, vomiting, and lethargy, and may resemble the flu. Because the disease progresses rapidly, often in as little as 12 hours, students are urged to seek medical care immediately if they experience two or more of these symptoms concurrently. In overwhelming infections, shock, coma, and death can follow within several hours, even with appropriate medical treatment.

**What is the treatment for meningococcal disease?** A number of effective antibiotics can be used. It is critical to start treatment early to avoid death or permanent disabilities. One in five who survive will suffer from long-term side effects such as brain damage, hearing loss, seizures, or limb amputation.

**Should people who have been in contact with a diagnosed case of meningococcal meningitis be treated?** Meningitis is contagious and progresses very rapidly. People who have been in close contact (household members, intimate contacts, health care personnel performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, day care center playmates, etc.) need to be considered for preventive treatment with antibiotics to prevent them from getting the disease. Casual contact as might occur in a regular classroom, office, or factory setting is not usually significant enough to cause concern.

**Should college students be vaccinated against meningococcal disease?** College freshmen living in residence halls, are at an increased risk of meningococcal disease relative to other people their age. The MCV4 vaccine is recommended for previously unvaccinated first-year college students, age younger than 22 years, who are or will be living in a residence hall.

**Is there a vaccine to prevent meningococcal meningitis?** Presently, there are vaccines that will protect against some of the strains of meningococcus. It is recommended for college students, in outbreak situations, and for those traveling to areas of the world where high rates of the disease are known to occur. Meningococcal meningitis vaccines are available from the local health departments, primary doctors, and pharmacies. cost of the vaccines range from approximately \$100-\$200. Many health insurance providers cover the cost of the vaccines. Without insurance, the cost of the vaccines ranges from approximately \$100-\$200. The vaccines are not available at SUNY Niagara.

**Is the vaccine safe and how long does it provide protection?** The vaccines are very safe and adverse reactions are mild and infrequent. The meningococcal vaccines efficacy may last five years or longer.

**Additional information** is also available on the websites of the New York State Department of Health: <http://www.health.state.ny.us/>; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/DiseasesConditions/>; and American College Health Association: [www.acha.org](http://www.acha.org)

☐ I read, or have had explained to me, the information regarding meningococcal disease. I have **decided, I (my child) will not obtain immunization against Meningococcal ACWY disease.**

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(To be completed and signed by parent/guardian if student is a MINOR)