

MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE (Meningitis)

Recent legislation passed by the General Assembly of Virginia and signed into law on March 20, 2001 requires vaccination against meningococcal disease for all incoming full-time students at Christopher Newport University and other public four-year institutions of higher education.

The legislation does allow any student or, if the student is under age 18, the student’s parent or legal representative, to sign a written waiver for the vaccine. The waiver states that s/he has received and reviewed information on meningococcal disease and the availability and effectiveness of the meningococcal vaccine, and has chosen not to be vaccinated.

After reviewing the information below on meningococcal disease you must make a decision regarding the vaccine. Vaccine Indicate on this form whether you 1) choose not to be vaccinated *or* 2) have been vaccinated against meningococcal disease. Meningococcal disease is a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis. Meningococcal disease is rare, however its initial flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult. If not treated early, the disease can lead to brain damage, vital organ failure, permanent disability and even death. Cases of meningococcal disease among teens and young adults 15 to 24 years of age have more than doubled since 1991. Recent studies indicate that college students living in dormitories and particularly freshmen dormitory residents are at increased risk of infection. An estimated 100 to 125 cases of meningococcal disease occur on college campuses each year. Of those students infected as many as 15 may die.

The meningococcal vaccine protects against four of the five strains of the bacteria which causes meningococcal disease (strains A, C, Y, and W-135). It is estimated that vaccination would prevent approximately two-thirds of all cases of meningococcal disease in college students and up to 88% of deaths. The vaccine is considered safe and is well tolerated with the most common side effect being soreness at the injection site. It provides protection against meningococcal disease for three to five years. The Haemophilus influenza type b (Hib) vaccine given to infants and young children is often referred to as a “meningitis vaccine”. The Hib vaccine does not protect against meningococcal disease and does not meet the vaccination requirement.

Additional information can be obtained on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at <http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm> (select meningococcal disease) or the American College Health Association website at <http://www.acha.org> .

MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINE WAIVER FORM

Student Name _____

Name and relationship of person completing form, if other than the student:

Name _____

(Please mark the appropriate box)

- Parent
- Legal Representative

By signing below, I agree that I have received and read information regarding meningococcal disease and do not wish to receive the vaccine.

Signature _____ Date _____
Student, or if under 18, parent or legal representative

RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION

Section 23-7.5 of the Code of Virginia, as amended March 2001, states “Any student shall be exempt from the immunization requirement who objects on the grounds that administration of immunizing agents conflicts with his/her religious tenets or practice, unless an emergency or epidemic of disease has been declared by the Board of Health.” Such students must submit a “Certification of Religious Exemption” (form CRE-1), which may be obtained by contacting the CNU Office of Admissions, or the Office of the Registrar.