MENINGITIS ON CAMPUS
KNOW YOUR RISK
LEARN ABOUT VACCINATION

Certain college students are at increased risk for meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis. In fact, freshmen living in dorms are found to have a six fold increased risk for the disease. A U.S. health advisory panel recommends that college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms, learn more about meningitis and vaccination.

What is meningococcal meningitis?
Meningitis is rare. But when it strikes, this potentially fatal bacterial disease can lead to swelling of fluid surrounding the brain and spinal column as well as severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, limb amputation and even death.

How is it spread?
Meningococcal meningitis is spread through the air via respiratory secretions or close contact with an infected person. This can include coughing, sneezing, kissing or sharing items like utensils, cigarettes and drinking glasses.

What are the symptoms?
Symptoms of meningococcal meningitis, often resemble the flu and can include high fever, severe headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea, vomiting, lethargy and confusion.

Who is at risk?
Certain college students, particularly freshmen who live in dormitories or residence halls, have been found to have an increased risk for meningococcal meningitis. Other undergraduates can also consider vaccination to reduce their risk for the disease.

Can meningitis be prevented?
Yes. A safe and effective vaccine is available to protect against four of the five most common strains of the disease. The vaccine provides protection for approximately three to five years. As with any vaccine, vaccination against meningitis may not protect 100 percent of all susceptible individuals.

For more information: To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, visit or call UMES Charles R. Drew Student Health Center (410-651-6597). You may also visit the websites of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo, and the American College Health Association, www.acha.org.

MENINGITIS VACCINE WAIVER

I understand that under Maryland law students enrolled in a Maryland institution of higher education and who reside in on-campus student housing are required to be vaccinated against meningococcal disease, or may seek exemption from this law. I have read the meningitis information available on the reverse of this page where the risks are detailed. In addition, I acknowledge the detrimental health effects of the disease. Lastly, I have read and understand the availability and effectiveness of the vaccine.

I do not wish the vaccine and I voluntarily agree to release, discharge, indemnify and hold harmless the State of Maryland, the University, its officers, employees and agents from any and all costs, liabilities, expenses, claims, demands, or causes of action on account of any loss or personal injury that might result from my non-compliance with the law.

To be filled out by student and parent/guardian, if applicable.
I have read and signed this document with full knowledge of its significance. I further state that I am at least 18 years of age and competent to sign this waiver.

Student Signature ___________________________ Date _____________________

If the student is under age 18, a parent/guardian must sign this waiver.
Signature of Parent/Guardian ___________________________ Date _____________________

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print) _____________________________________________