ARCADIA UNIVERSITY
SINCE 1853

Meningitis Information and Waiver

College and university students are at increased risk of meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as spinal meningitis. In fact, first-year (freshmen) students living in residence halls are found to have a six-fold increased risk for the disease. The American College Health Association, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends that college students, particularly first-year (freshmen) students living in residence halls, learn more about meningitis and vaccination. At least 70% of all cases of meningococcal disease in college students are vaccine-preventable.

Many states have recently passed legislation mandating the meningitis vaccine for students living in residence halls. **Pennsylvania has passed legislation (Senate Bill 955) stating all students residing in a college-owned residence hall or housing unit either have the vaccine of sign a declination statement after having received information concerning the benefits of receiving the meningitis vaccine.**

- **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 first-year (freshmen) students who live in residence halls, have been found to have an increased risk for meningococcal meningitis. Other students should 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. Adverse reactions to the meningitis vaccine are mild and infrequent, consisting primarily of redness and discomfort at the injection site and rarely a fever. As with any vaccine, vaccination against meningitis may not protect 100 percent of all susceptible individuals. It does not protect against viral meningitis.

- **For more information:** To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, visit the Arcadia University Student Health Services or call (215) 572-2966. You can also visit the websites of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov/ncidid/dbmd/diseaseinfo, and the American College Health Association www.acha.org.

Meningitis Vaccine Waiver

I have read and understand the information about meningitis, and I decline the meningitis vaccine at this time for the following reason(s):

□ Religious/Cultural beliefs

□ Medical indications (please explain):

_____

_____

□ Other (Please explain):

_____

_____

_____
Print Name

_____
Signature of Student Date

_____
Social Security Number

_____
Signature of Parent (If student is 17 years of age or younger)