

Bard Meningococcal Meningitis Vaccination Response

Dear Parent/Student:

As the Health Service director at Bard College, I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis, and the New York State law. New York Public Health Law 2167 requires institutions, including colleges and universities, to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to all students meeting the enrollment criteria, whether they live on or off campus. This law became effective on August 15, 2003.

Bard College is required to maintain a record of the following for each student:

- A Meningococcal Meningitis Vaccination Response Form signed by the student or student's parent or guardian. The response form must include information on the availability and cost of the meningococcal meningitis vaccine (Menomune™ or Menactra™); AND EITHER
- A record of meningococcal meningitis immunization within the past 10 years; OR
- An acknowledgment of meningococcal disease risks and refusal of meningococcal meningitis immunization signed by the student or student's parent or guardian.

Meningitis is rare. However, when it strikes, its flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult. If not treated early, meningitis can lead to swelling of the 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.

Cases of meningitis among teens and young adults 15 to 24 years of age (the age of most college students) have more than doubled since 1991. The disease strikes about 3,000 Americans each year and claims about 300 lives. Between 100 and 125 meningitis cases occur on college campuses each year; of those diagnosed, as many as 15 will die from the disease.

A vaccine is available that protects against four types of the bacteria that can cause meningitis in the United States—types A, C, Y, and W-135. These types account for nearly two-thirds of the meningitis cases among college students.

We strongly recommend that all students receive the meningitis vaccine prior to arrival at the College.

Students can get the vaccination on campus. The vaccination is not covered by the Bard insurance plan and any fees will be charged to your student account. If we are unable to get this vaccine at no charge from New York State, the fee for the vaccination could be as high as \$125.

Please complete the Meningococcal Meningitis Vaccination Response Form below and return it to:

Bard College Student Health Service
PO Box 5000
Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504

If you have questions, feel free to contact us at 845-758-7433 or healthservice@bard.edu.

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, please feel free to contact our health service and/or consult with your physician. You can also find information about the disease at the following websites: www.health.state.ny.us, www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo, and www.acha.org.

Sincerely,

Marsha R. Davis, RN, MS, FNP
Director, Bard College Student Health Service

(continued)

Student Health Service, Bard College, PO Box 5000, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504-5000

Telephone: 845-758-7433 Fax: 845-758-7437 E-mail: healthservice@bard.edu Website: www.bard.edu

Meningococcal Meningitis Vaccination Response Form

New York State public 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:

Bard College Student Health Service
PO Box 5000
Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504

To be completed and signed by student or parent/guardian for student under the age of 18.

Student's name _____ Date of birth _____

Check one (1) statement only:

I have received meningococcal meningitis immunization (Menomune™ received within the previous five years or Menactra™ received within the last 10 years).

Immunization Date: _____

I have read the information regarding meningococcal meningitis disease. I will obtain immunization against meningococcal meningitis from my private health care provider within 30 days of the date of this form or from the Bard College Student Health Service within 30 days of my arrival on campus. I agree to submit certification of the date of immunization to the Bard College Health Service.

Please check all that apply:

I have read the information provided on meningococcal meningitis.

I understand the risks of not receiving the meningococcal meningitis vaccination, but decline.

I would like to receive the vaccination but I cannot afford it at this time (\$125).

Signature _____ Date _____

Student's home address _____
Street

City State Zip Country

Telephone _____ E-mail _____
Home Cell

All inquiries may be directed to the Bard College Student Health Service, 845-758-7433 or healthservice@bard.edu.