

Colleges: Massachusetts requires all newly enrolled full-time students 21 years of age and under attending a postsecondary institution (e.g., college) to receive a dose of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine on or after their 16th birthday to protect against serotypes A, C, W, and Y or fall within one of the exemptions in the law, discussed on the reverse side of this sheet.

Residential Schools: Massachusetts requires all newly enrolled full-time students attending a secondary school who will be living in a dormitory or other congregate housing licensed or approved by the secondary school or institution (e.g., boarding school) to receive the quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine to protect against serotypes A, C, W, and Y or fall within one of the exemptions in the law, discussed on the reverse side of this sheet.

The law provides an exemption for students signing a waiver that reviews the dangers of meningococcal disease and indicates that the vaccination has been declined. To qualify for this exemption, you are required to review the information below and sign the waiver at the end of this document. Please note, that if a student is under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian must be given a copy of this document and must sign the waiver.

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria with bacteriophage T0 Tc 0 Tw ()Tj-0.003 Tc 0.005 Tw 16.787 0 Td(m)-3.3 (a)-7.1 (y)10.4 ()-6.7 (a)-7 ()

Which students are most at risk for meningococcal disease?

In the 1990s, college freshmen living in residence halls were identified as being at increased risk for meningococcal disease. Meningococcal disease and outbreaks in young adults were primarily due to serogroup C. However, following many years of routine vaccination of young people with quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine (for serogroups A, C, W, and Y), serogroup B is now the primary cause of meningococcal disease and outbreaks in young adults. Among the approximately 9 million students aged 18-21 years enrolled in college, there are an average of 20 cases and 0-4 outbreaks due to serogroup B reported annually. Although the incidence of serogroup B meningococcal disease in college students is low, four-year college students are at increased risk compared to non-college students; risk is highest among first-year students living on campus. The close contact in college residence halls, combined with social mixing activities (such as going to bars, clubs, or parties; participating in Greek life; sharing food or beverages; and other activities involving the exchange of saliva), may put college students at increased risk.

Is there a vaccine against meningococcal disease?

Yes, there are 2 different meningococcal vaccines.

school or institution and newly enrolled full-time students 21 years of age and younger attending a postsecondary institution (e.g., college) to receive a dose of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine.

At affected secondary schools, the requirements apply to all new full-time residential students, regardless of grade (including grades pre-K through 8) and year of study. Secondary school students must provide documentation of having received a dose of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine at any time in the past unless they qualify for one of the exemptions allowed by the law. College students 21 years of age and younger must provide documentation of having received a dose of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine on or after their 16th birthday regardless of housing status unless they qualify for one of the exemptions allowed by the law. Meningococcal B vaccines are not required and do not fulfill the requirement for meningococcal vaccine. Whenever possible, immunizations should be obtained prior to enrollment or registration. However, students may be enrolled or registered provided that the required immunizations are obtained within 30 days of registration.

Exemptions: Students may begin classes without a certificate of immunization against meningococcal disease if: 1) the student has a letter from a physician stating that there is a medical reason why they can't receive the vaccine; 2) the student (or the student's legal guardian, if the student is a minor) presents a statement in writing that such vaccination is against their sincere religious belief; or 3) the student (or the student's legal guardian, if the student is a minor) signs the waiver below stating that the student has received information about the dangers of meningococcal disease, reviewed the information provided and elected to decline the vaccine.

Shouldn't meningococcal B vaccine be required?

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has reviewed the available data regarding serogroup B meningococcal disease and the vaccines. At this time, there is no routine recommendation and no statewide requirement for meningococcal B vaccination before going to college (although some colleges may institute a requirement). Those aged 16-23 years may be vaccinated with a serogroup B meningococcal vaccine, preferably at 16-18 years of age, to provide short-term protection against most strains of serogroup B meningococcal disease. This is decided by the patient and healthcare provider. These policies may change as new information becomes available.

Where can a student get vaccinated?

Students and their legal guardians should contact their healthcare providers to make an appointment to discuss meningococcal disease, the benefits and risks of vaccination, and the availability of these vaccines. Schools and college health services are not required to provide this vaccine.

Where can I get more information?

Your healthcare provider; your local Board of Health (listed in the phone book under government); or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Divisions of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800 or on the MDPH website at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/school-immunizations>.

Waiver for Meningococcal Vaccination Requirement

I have received and reviewed the information provided on the risks of meningococcal disease and the risks and benefits of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine. I understand that Massachusetts law requires newly enrolled full-time students at secondary schools who are living in a dormitory or congregate living arrangement licensed or approved by the secondary school, and newly enrolled full-time students at colleges and universities who are 21 years of age or younger to receive meningococcal vaccinations, unless the students provide a signed waiver of the vaccination or otherwise qualify for one of the exemptions specified in the law.

- After reviewing the materials above on the dangers of meningococcal disease, I choose to waive receipt of the meningococcal vaccine.

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Student ID: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Student or parent/legal guardian if the student is under 18 years of age)