

Dear Parents,

Re: Maryland State Health Requirement - Meningococcal Vaccination

Maryland state law requires that students residing in on-campus housing at institutions of higher education, including Bais HaMedrash and Mesivta of Baltimore, must be vaccinated for meningitis. A student who wishes to be exempt from the vaccination requirement must sign a waiver. If a student is less than 18 years of age, his parent or legal guardian must sign the waiver for exemption.

To comply with the state law, Bais HaMedrash and Mesivta of Baltimore is not allowed to house a student in on-campus housing unless he has either received the meningococcal vaccination within the preceding five years before moving on-campus (with signed documentation from a doctor as required on the enclosed form of receipt of the vaccine protecting against at least the four serogroups of A, C, Y and W-135 of meningococcal disease), or the exemption waiver is signed by the student or parent/guardian, if student is less than 18 years of age.

We are enclosing informational materials regarding meningococcal disease for your review and a form that must be completed and returned promptly to the Yeshiva office. Please read the instructions carefully and complete Section A and either Section B or C. If section B is completed, signed physician documentation must be included. The exemption waiver is contained in Section C for student or (if under age 18) parent signature.

We urge you to review the informational materials and discuss this matter with your personal physician before making a decision as to whether to obtain the vaccine from your medical provider or sign the exemption waiver. If the vaccine has already been received within the past several years, you should attach signed confirmation from your doctor with the completed form.

Your prompt response and compliance with this requirement is important so that your son can be assured of a dormitory room. Please return the attached form and ensure that both sides are sent if you are faxing it back to us.

Hanhalas HaYeshiva



**Section B: TO BE COMPLETED ONLY FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINE**

**(Signed physician documentation must be included below or attached)**

Dates:

Meningococcal Vaccine \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The vaccine is effective for approximately three to five years. Students whose vaccinations have not been issued within the past five years, will be asked to update their immunization in order to be in compliance with the law.

Physician Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Section C: TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENTS REQUESTING AN EXEMPTION.**

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. With this waiver, I seek exemption from this requirement. I have read the health information provided where the risks of the disease 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 which may be available from my physician or other health provider and voluntarily choose to waive receipt of meningococcal vaccine.

I voluntarily agree to release, discharge, indemnify and hold harmless Bais HaMedrash and Mesivta of Baltimore, its officers, employees and agents from 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.

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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Student (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If the Student is under age 18, a parent/guardian must sign this waiver below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parent/Guardian (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Meningococcal Disease Fact Sheet

***Neisseria meningitidis* (the meningococcus) is a bacterium that can cause serious infections.**

Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection that can cause meningitis (inflammation of the brain and spinal cord covering), sepsis (blood infection), pneumonia (lung infection), or joint infections. Meningococcal disease can be quite severe and may result in brain damage, hearing loss, loss of limbs, or even death. Meningococcal disease is one of the important causes of bacterial meningitis in the United States.

**Meningococcal disease is spread from person-to-person through close contact with infected respiratory secretions.**

Meningococci are spread by direct, close contact with saliva, mucous, or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person. The bacteria are not spread by breathing the air where someone with the disease has been. Many people carry the bacteria in their noses and throats, but they do not become ill – they are called “carriers.” These carriers can spread the bacteria to other people.

**Symptoms to look for include:**

- High fever
- Nausea and vomiting
- Severe headache
- Neck stiffness
- Skin rash of small, bright, red spots or a larger, reddish/purple “bruise”

Symptoms occur within 2 to 10 days (usually 3 to 4 days) after a person has been exposed; symptoms often begin suddenly.

**Laboratory testing is needed to confirm a meningococcal infection.**

People who think they have a meningococcal infection should see a doctor **immediately** for evaluation. The diagnosis is usually made by testing the blood or spinal fluid.

**See a doctor immediately for treatment.**

Early diagnosis and treatment are very important. Meningococcal disease can be treated with an antibiotic and supportive care.

**A person in close contact with someone who has meningococcal disease** should seek medical advice as well. Preventive treatment with certain antibiotics is often recommended and should not be delayed. Your doctor or health department will decide which antibiotic is best in your situation. Close contacts might include:

- Persons who live in the same house;
- Persons who have contact with mouth or nose secretions, such as through kissing and sharing eating utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes;
- Some child care or nursery school contacts;
- Persons who have been involved in medical procedures, such as intubation or mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

**A vaccine is available to prevent the most types of meningococcal disease.**

A single dose of meningococcal vaccine is recommended for all children ages 11 to 18 years. The vaccine is also recommended for certain high risk groups such as military recruits, travelers to high risk areas (such as the “meningitis belt” of sub-Saharan Africa), persons without a spleen, certain laboratory workers, and some others. In Maryland, vaccination of all college students who live on-campus in a dormitory is required.

For additional information about meningococcal vaccine, please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/Pubs/vis/default.htm>.