



UMKC Meningitis Policy

College students, especially first-year college students living in residence halls, are at an increased risk for meningococcal disease compared with other persons of the same age. Many states have adopted legislation requiring colleges to provide information on risks of meningococcal disease to incoming students and/or students residing on campus, and some have mandated vaccination for certain students, unless a vaccination waiver is provided.

All college students living on campus at are required to provide proof of the meningitis vaccination within the past 5 years. This mandate is a provision of Senate Bill 716, signed into law July 10, 2014. Students who fail to provide proof of the vaccine or an acceptable waiver will not be allowed to occupy a residential space on campus.

The statute reads:

MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINE (Section 174.335)

Under this act, each student attending a public institution of higher education who lives in on-campus housing must receive the meningococcal vaccine unless he or she has a medical or religious exemption.

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial illness. Meningitis is an infection of the covering of the brain and the spinal cord. About 1,000–1,200 people get meningococcal disease each year in the U.S. Even when they are treated with antibiotics, 10–15% of these people die. Of those who live, another 11%–19% suffer limb loss, have problems with their nervous systems, become deaf, or suffer seizures or strokes. Anyone can get meningococcal disease. However, it is most common in infants and people 16–21 years of age. College-aged individuals residing in group living environments (such as residence halls) are at increased risk of this infection. Meningococcal infections can be treated with drugs such as penicillin. Still, many people who get the disease die from it, and many others are affected for life. This is why preventing the disease through use of the meningococcal vaccine is important for people at highest risk.

What causes meningococcal disease?

There are several pathogens (types of germs) that can cause bacterial meningitis. Some of the leading causes of bacterial meningitis in the United States include *Haemophilus influenzae* (most often caused by type b, Hib), *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, group B *Streptococcus*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, and *Neisseria meningitidis*.

Neisseria meningitidis is a leading cause of bacterial meningitis in teenagers and young adults. It is also the one with the potential to cause large epidemics (college dormitories, boarding schools and military bases). There are 6 serogroups of *N. meningitidis* that have been identified that can cause epidemics (A, B, C, W, X and Y).

How is meningococcal disease prevented?

The most effective way to protect yourself against meningitis is to receive the recommended vaccinations.

There are two meningococcal vaccines that protect against serogroups A, C, Y, and W-135 and must be administered for residence on-campus:

- **Menveo**
- **Menactra**

Additional meningococcal vaccinations that protect against serogroup B that are not required for residence but will help decrease further risk:

- **Trumenba**
- **Bexsero**



Requesting an Exemption to the Vaccination Requirement

Students are encouraged to receive the meningitis vaccination because of the higher prevalence of this serious infection in adolescents and young adults. However, a student or the parent or guardian of a student may decline the meningitis vaccination for medical reasons, or for reasons of conscience that include a religious belief.

In order to receive an exemption to the vaccine requirement turn in this completed form to the Office of Residential Life (5051 Oak St., Kansas City, MO 64112-2840) along with an affidavit that satisfies the conditions outlined below.

Medical Exemption:

- An affidavit or certificate signed by a health care provider (physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or midwife caring for a pregnant student) that is duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States. This affidavit/certificate must state that the student has a health condition which is a valid contraindication to receiving the meningitis vaccine; then a permanent or temporary (for resolvable conditions such as pregnancy) exemption may be granted.
1. This affidavit must specify the meningitis vaccine which may be detrimental and the length of time it may be detrimental.
 2. The affidavit must state provisions for review records of temporarily exempted persons periodically to see if contraindications still exist.
 3. In the event of a meningitis outbreak, all students should be protected from exposure. This may include exclusion from classes or campus.

Known Medical Contraindications for Meningitis Vaccine:

- Anyone who has ever had hypersensitivity or a severe (life-threatening) allergic reaction to a previous dose of MCV4 or MPSV4 vaccine should not get another dose of either vaccine.
- Anyone known to have experienced Guillain-Barre (GBS) syndrome.
- Anyone who is moderately or severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled should wait until they recover. Ask your doctor. People with a mild illness can usually get the vaccine.

Religious Exemption:

An affidavit signed by the student, student's parent(s), or guardian of those less than 18 years old stating that the student declines the meningitis vaccination for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief. A student may be exempt from vaccination if, in the opinion of the institution, the student holds genuine and sincere religious beliefs which are contrary to the practice of immunization. The student requesting exemption may or may not be a member of an established religious organization. The institution may require supporting documents.

1. This statement must specify the meningitis vaccine that is be exempted.
2. In the event of a meningitis outbreak, all students should be protected from exposure. This may include exclusion from classes or campus.

Student Name (printed) _____ ID Number _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____