



HEPATITIS B INFORMATION & VACCINATION WAIVER

Hepatitis B is a serious infectious disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver. The hepatitis B virus (HBV) can cause life-long infection that may lead to cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, or death. *There is no cure for hepatitis B*, but the infection can be prevented by vaccination.

Symptoms of the Disease

Symptoms of hepatitis B can resemble the flu and may include fever, loss of appetite, low energy, joint pain, cramping, or nausea and vomiting, as well as jaundice (yellow skin or eyes). However, in about 50 percent of cases, hepatitis B causes no symptoms and some of these become chronic carriers who are able to transmit the disease to others.

Transmission of the Disease

Hepatitis B is contagious and spreads when the blood or other body fluids of a person with the virus are absorbed into an individual's blood stream. The hepatitis B virus can live in all body fluids of an infected person, including blood, saliva, semen, and vaginal fluids. It can enter the body through cuts, tears, or abrasions in the skin and through mucous membranes of the mouth, vagina, anus, and eyes. Hepatitis B can be transmitted through sexual contact; by sharing razors, toothbrushes, shared needles for drug injection, or by getting a tattoo or body piercing using non-sterile instruments or needles.

Risk Factors for Hepatitis B

Anyone who comes in contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person is at risk for hepatitis B. Certain behaviors can increase the risk, including unprotected sex (vaginal, anal, and oral); contact sports (sports during which players may be exposed to each other's blood or saliva); getting a tattoo or body piercing; sharing items such as razors, earrings, and toothbrushes; sharing injection drug paraphernalia; travel abroad to areas where the disease is widespread; health care and other occupations that involve exposure to infected blood or body fluids; and household contact with someone with chronic infection.

Vaccination Recommendations for College Students

A vaccine is available to help protect against hepatitis B. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination of everyone age 18 and under, and anyone at high risk for hepatitis B. The American College Health Association (ACHA) recommends that all college students be vaccinated and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) recommends that all student athletes be vaccinated. The hepatitis B vaccine is safe and effective. *You cannot get the disease from the vaccine.* The most common side effect of the vaccine is soreness at the site of the injection. Vaccination requires a series of three shots over a six-month period. After that, a booster shot is usually not necessary. The vaccine is effective in protecting over 96 percent of those who complete the three-dose vaccination series.

Other Forms of Prevention

In addition to vaccination, people can modify their behavior by using condoms during sex and avoiding tattooing and body piercing with non-sterile instruments or techniques. One also can avoid sharing needles, razors, or toothbrushes.

For more information about Hepatitis B and other infectious diseases:

To learn more about hepatitis B and other infectious diseases, as well as available vaccines, please contact your physician or visit the CDC web site at www.cdc.gov and/or the FIU University Health Services web site at: www.fiu.edu/~health.

WAIVER OF LIABILITY:

I have read the information above pertaining to hepatitis B. I understand the risks involved and I decline to receive the hepatitis B vaccine.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Last Name	First Name	D.O.B.	Panther I.D.
_____			_____
Signature of student (or parent/legal guardian, if under 18 years of age)			Date

MENINGITIS INFORMATION & VACCINATION WAIVER

Meningitis is an infection of the fluid of a person's spinal cord and the fluid that surrounds the brain. People sometimes refer to it as spinal meningitis. Meningitis is usually caused by a viral or bacterial infection. Knowing whether meningitis is caused by a virus or bacterium is important because the severity of illness and the treatment differ. Viral meningitis is generally less severe and resolves without specific treatment, while bacterial meningitis can be quite severe and may result in brain damage, hearing loss, learning disability, or death. For bacterial meningitis, it is also important to know which strain of bacteria is causing the meningitis because antibiotics can prevent some types from spreading and infecting other people. *Neisseria meningitidis* (also called meningococcal meningitis) is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis.

What are the signs and symptoms of meningitis?

Common Triad of symptoms: high fever, headache, and stiff neck. These symptoms can develop over several hours, or they may take 1 to 2 days. Other symptoms include nausea, vomiting, skin rash, discomfort looking into light, confusion, and sleepiness.

How is meningitis diagnosed?

Early diagnosis and treatment are very important. If symptoms occur, the patient should see a doctor immediately. The diagnosis is usually made in the laboratory from a sample of spinal fluid. The spinal fluid is obtained by performing a spinal tap, in which a needle is inserted into an area in the lower back where fluid in the spinal canal is readily accessible. Test results from the spinal fluid can identify if the cause is viral or bacterial and, if the latter, may help determine the selection of antibiotics most effective in treatment.

Can meningitis be treated?

Bacterial meningitis can be treated with a number of effective antibiotics. It is important, however, that treatment be started early in the course of the disease. Appropriate antibiotic treatment of most common types of bacterial meningitis should reduce the risk of dying from meningitis to below 15%, although the risk is higher among the elderly.

Is meningitis contagious?

Yes, bacterial meningitis is highly contagious. The bacteria are spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions (i.e., coughing, kissing). Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as things like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. However, sometimes the bacteria that cause meningitis have spread to other people who have had close or prolonged contact with a patient with meningitis. People in the same household or day-care center, or anyone sharing a bathroom or having direct contact with a patient's oral secretions (such as a boyfriend or girlfriend) would be considered at increased risk of acquiring the infection. People who qualify as close contacts of a person with meningitis caused by *N. meningitidis* should receive antibiotics immediately to prevent them from getting the disease.

Are there vaccines against meningitis?

Yes, there are vaccines that protect against some strains of *N. meningitidis* but there are no vaccines to protect against viral forms. The vaccine against *N. meningitidis* is sometimes used to control outbreaks of some types of meningococcal meningitis in the United States. Meningitis cases should be reported to state or local health departments to assure follow-up of close contacts and recognize outbreaks. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that all people at risk should receive one dose of the conjugate vaccine (Menactra) whenever possible. This is particularly true for college students who are under the age of 25 and live in close quarters with others or someone who has had his/her spleen removed; these are two groups who have an increased risk of acquiring meningococcal infection relative to other persons their age.

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, please contact your physician or visit the CDC web site at www.cdc.gov and/or the FIU University Health Services web site at: www.fiu.edu/~health.

WAIVER OF LIABILITY:

I have read the information above pertaining to meningitis. I understand the risks involved and I decline to receive the meningitis vaccine.

Last Name

First Name

D.O.B.

Panther I.D.

Signature of student (or parent/legal guardian, if under 18 years of age)

Date