

Tennessee Department of Health Immunization Requirements for Students Enrolling in Higher Education Institutions in Tennessee after July 2011:

(Tennessee Department of Health Rule 1200-14-1-.29, revised December 2009)

Who is required to be immunized?

New **full time** enrollees in higher education institutions (post-secondary) in Tennessee with enrollments larger than 200 students.

- New undergraduates enrolled in at least 12 semester hours, or equivalent.
- New graduate students enrolled in at least 9 semester hours, or equivalent.

Exempt: full time distance learning students are exempt from immunization requirements.

Note: Institutions may have policies or requirements that go beyond state requirements.

Measles, mumps and rubella immunity:

Proof of immunity to measles, mumps and rubella may be provided by meeting one of the following three criteria:

- Date of birth before 1957, or
- Documentation of 2 doses vaccine against measles, mumps and rubella given at least 28 days apart, excluding doses given earlier than 4 days before the first birthday, or
- Documentation of blood test (serology) showing immunity to measles, mumps and rubella. If any one of the three is negative, 2 doses of vaccine must be documented.

Varicella (*chicken pox*) immunity:

Proof of immunity to varicella (chicken pox) is required by meeting one of the following four criteria:

- Date of birth before 1980, or
- History of chicken pox illness diagnosed by a healthcare provider or verified by a physician, advanced practice nurse or physician assistant to whom the illness is described, or
- Documentation of 2 doses of varicella vaccine given at least 28 days apart, excluding doses given earlier than 4 days before the first birthday, or
- Documentation of blood test (*serology*) showing immunity to varicella.

Hepatitis B immunity (*only for health science students expected to have patient contact*):

Proof of immunity to hepatitis B for students in health sciences prior to patient care duties may be documented in one of the following ways:

- Documentation of 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine, or
- Blood test (*serology*) showing immunity to hepatitis B virus (*or infection*)

Valid exemptions to requirements:

- **Medical:** Physician or health department indicates that certain vaccines are medically exempted (*because of risk of harm*). Any vaccines not exempted remain required.
- **Religious:** Requires a signed statement by the student that vaccination conflicts with his or her religious tenets or practices.

Students who need 2 doses of vaccines, but cannot get both doses before classes start: Such students may enroll with documentation of one dose of each required vaccine, but the institution should have a policy to require timely submission of proof of complete immunization. Such policies might include not releasing semester grades or not allowing course registration for the next semester until proof of complete immunization is provided.

Location of immunization records: Adults can have difficulty locating childhood immunization records. They should check with family members who may have copies of childhood records. They should try to contact the original immunization provider: if a local health department, contact them directly; if a private medical office, contact that office. Schools may have copies of immunization certificates in student files. Children born after the mid-1990s may have records entered in a state-managed immunization registry; such registries now exist in many states, but are unlikely to contain information on adults. If records cannot be located, vaccination is recommended – additional doses of vaccine are not harmful.

For more information: visit <http://twis.tn.gov> or <http://health.state.tn.us/CEDS/required.htm>.

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