

# What You Need to Know about the Oregon College/University Immunization Law

*Documentation of measles immunization is required for many Oregon college students.*

## Colleges/Universities

Students need to show that they've been vaccinated against measles when enrolling in a college or university in Oregon as a full-time student (undergraduate and graduate). The Oregon college immunization law applies to any full-time student born on or after January 1, 1957.

## Community Colleges

Students participating in practicum experiences in allied health, education, early childhood education and intercollegiate sports are required to meet measles requirements in community colleges.



Colleges can require that students have additional vaccinations. Check with the college about any additional requirements.

## *Measles can be very serious.*

At one time, getting measles was a normal part of growing up. Then, during the 1960's, effective vaccines became available and this "childhood" disease was all but eliminated. Most people receive the vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) in one shot. A second dose of measles containing vaccine is required in case the person's immune system did not respond to the first dose.

## MMR protects against:

- **Measles** can cause life-threatening pneumonia and brain inflammation, middle-ear infections, severe diarrhea, and sometimes convulsions. The risk of death from measles is higher in adults than children.
- **Mumps** can cause hearing loss. About one out of four teenage or adult men who have mumps may experience swelling of the testicles. In rare cases, sterility can result.
- **Rubella** is usually a milder disease in children. It can be very serious if a grown woman gets rubella during the first three months of pregnancy. The disease can cause serious birth defects including glaucoma, cataracts, deafness, and mental retardation.

Be sure to keep a record of vaccines on file. This information likely will be needed again during a person's lifetime.

## Necessary documentation to meet the measles immunization requirement

Under Oregon law, a student must submit proof of two doses of measles vaccine or meet one of the legal exemptions. Adequate proof is written documentation of the date of each dose of measles (the first dose must have been on or after the first birthday and at least 24 days must have passed between the first and second dose). Documentation for **students born before January 1984** could also include no date for the first dose, but documentation for a second dose if given in or after December 1989.

## When this documentation is required?

Most colleges and universities require the vaccine documentation for students before they can register for their second term or semester classes. International students (non-immigrant visas) must provide the documentation of at least one dose of measles containing vaccine before they can attend any classes.

## What to do if a shot record cannot be found

First, if the vaccines were received in Oregon, adults can contact ALERT IIS at 1-800-980-9431. ALERT IIS is a state-wide registry system which may or may not have the vaccines on file. If ALERT IIS does not have the dates, contact the medical provider or clinic where health care was received to see if they have the immunization record. The former school district in Oregon may have the records. If you are unable to find the date or unable to remember if it was given, it is safe to go ahead and get a dose of MMR.

## Where shots are available

Most health care providers can provide vaccines. Colleges and universities may also offer shots, through the health service or a special immunization clinic. Those without a health care provider or health insurance may be able to get the shots through their county health department.

## Legal exemptions

A measles shot is not required if the person already had the disease. A doctor must verify history of disease or have a blood titer done that shows that the student is immune to measles.

A temporary medical exemption can also be signed for pregnancy. The vaccine would then be required after the baby is born. A permanent medical exemption is acceptable for a permanent contraindication to measles vaccination.

A student may claim a nonmedical exemption. For a nonmedical exemption, the student needs to speak to with a health care practitioner who can provide a signed Vaccine Education Certificate, or watch an online vaccine education module located at [www.healthoregon.org/vaccineexemption](http://www.healthoregon.org/vaccineexemption) and print the Vaccine Education Certificate. The student will need to file for a nonmedical exemption with the college or university. Students need to know that there are risks of not being vaccinated and that they may not be allowed to attend classes in the event of a disease occurrence on campus.

## Other vaccines recommended for adults

There are still occasional outbreaks of disease that can affect adults. Many of the following vaccines are recommended for students, especially those considering international travel. Students should check with their health clinic to see what additional shots might be needed. Also check the website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for international travel recommendations.

**Ask a health care provider for more information about any of these diseases and their risks.**

## Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis

Pertussis (whooping cough) infections have been increasingly seen in young adults in the last few years. The Tdap vaccine boosts protection against pertussis in addition to tetanus and diphtheria. Tdap is strongly recommended for all adults.

- **Tetanus** or "lockjaw"- can lead to fatal complications. Even small burns or scratches can be a source of infection, and deep puncture wounds are especially dangerous. A booster for diphtheria and tetanus is needed every 10 years to maintain protection.
- **Pertussis** is a serious disease especially for babies, but is spread by adults. Symptoms include a severe cough with a "whooping" sound and difficulty breathing.
- **Diphtheria** is a serious bacterial disease that affects the tonsils, throat, nose, and/or skin. It can lead to breathing problems, heart failure, paralysis, and sometimes death.

**Hepatitis A and B** both are contagious diseases that affect the liver

**Meningococcal** causes meningitis, an infection that can lead to dangerous swelling of the brain and spinal cord. It can lead to permanent disabilities and/or death.

**Varicella (Chickenpox)** is an infectious viral disease that is characterized by rash, itching, tiredness and fever. If a student has not had chickenpox, varicella vaccine should be received. Adults have a higher rate of complications from varicella than do children.

**Human papillomavirus (HPV)** is a virus that infects the genital area and lining of the cervix. There are many different types some of which infect the genital areas of men and women, causing warts. Other types can cause cervical cancer.

**Influenza (Flu)** is a virus that continually changes, so annual flu vaccination is recommended for anyone who wants to avoid getting the flu.

## Recommendations regarding screening for Tuberculosis (TB)

TB germs attack the lungs and other parts of the body. TB is a contagious and sometimes deadly disease. Although this is not an immunization, TB screening is often done along with immunizations. The college may ask for a skin test to be done to see if there has been exposure to TB. If the test is positive further follow-up may be required including x-rays, sputum cultures and/or medication.