

## Immunization Questions and Answers

**Q:** What if I do not have documentation of any or all of my vaccinations?

**A:** First, contact your physician's office and ask them to check your medical records. They may be able to provide you with documentation of vaccinations you have received. If not, you should have a titer (blood test for antibodies) drawn. You will need a separate test for each disease for which you do not have documentation of immunization. A positive titer suggests that you have immunity to the disease. **\*\*Please note that for Hepatitis B, you *must* have documentation of all three doses of vaccine *and* a *quantitative* titer (result = numerical value).**\*\*

**Q:** What if I never received one or more of the required immunizations because I had the illness?

**A:** You will need to have a titer drawn to prove that you have immunity to the disease.

**Q:** What if I have a titer drawn and it is negative?

**A:** Generally, you will need to receive the vaccine(s) again. Let us know as soon as possible if this occurs.

**Q:** Where can I get the vaccinations I need?

**A:** You may receive immunizations at Campus Health Services, from your local health department, or from your primary care provider. (Immunizations and tests required by the school can be obtained at Campus Health even if you are not enrolled for the current semester/session.)

**Q:** What is the deadline for required immunizations?

**A:** Failure to document the state-required immunizations within 30 calendar days of matriculation can result in your withdrawal from the University. Documentation of the additional requirements for Health Science Students are required before you begin any clinical placements. You will receive specific information about deadlines once you are enrolled in the program.

**Q:** I received one or two shots of the Hepatitis B vaccine earlier, but did not complete the three dose series. Do I need to start the series over?

**A:** No. If the Hepatitis B series is delayed, it does not have to be restarted. Studies show that the immune response is not affected by the delay. The second dose may be administered anytime at least one month after the first. The third dose may be administered anytime at least two months after the second and at least four months after the first. Remember that you must receive a titer at least 1 month after completing the series.

**Q:** I had the Hepatitis B series years ago. Will my titer be valid?

**A:** Ideally, a titer should be drawn 1-2 months after completion of the Hepatitis B vaccine series to document that you have responded to the vaccine and developed immunity. After 6 months, antibody levels begin to drop, and eventually they may be too low to detect, even if you did respond. However, you should still have the titer drawn. Many people maintain detectable levels of antibody for years after vaccination, so your titer may still be positive. If your titer is negative, you will need to follow the CLS protocol for negative titer... contact us for more information.

**Q:** My Hepatitis B titer is positive. Why do I also need documentation of the shots?

**A:** Research on the effectiveness of the Hepatitis B vaccine has demonstrated that lifelong immunity is conferred by a complete 3-dose series. If someone has received only one or two shots, there may be enough of an immune response to generate a positive titer, but protection may not be as long-lasting.

**Q:** I have had BCG vaccine. Should I be screened for tuberculosis? Will the vaccine cause a positive result?

**A:** Yes. Although BCG vaccine had potential to interfere with or complicate interpretation of skin tests for tuberculosis, it has not been shown to interfere with the blood tests (IGRA's) currently recommended for screening.

**Q:** I was screened for TB in the past. Do I really need to do it again?

**A:** Tuberculosis (TB) screening is an annual requirement for healthcare professionals, including students, in patient-care settings. You will be required to get a new blood test for TB each year, *unless* you have had a positive TB screen (blood test or skin test) in the past. If you have had a previous positive result, you should contact Campus Health for further evaluation. Documentation of the provider's evaluation will satisfy the TB screening requirement. (Evaluation by Campus Health will also be required for new positives or equivocal results.)

**Q:** Is another form of TB screening acceptable?

**A:** Current recommendations of the American Thoracic Society, Infectious Diseases Society of America, and Centers for Disease Control specify use of the blood test (IGRA) as the preferred method for TB screening of all adults.

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