

What College Students Should Know About Vaccines

Even healthy young adults and college students can be affected by **vaccine-preventable diseases**. Factors such as close living quarters, crowded classrooms, and sharing drinks with many different people can put students at even higher risk for illness. Thankfully, we have vaccines to help keep students healthy!



What are the vaccine requirements for college students?

Colorado requires two vaccines for students attending Colorado colleges or universities that have residence hall facilities within their systems:

Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)

- Applies to students who are enrolled in at least one class and will be physically present for participation in classes, athletics, or other activities.
- **Students must have two valid doses of MMR vaccine, meaning that:**
 - **Doses are separated by at least 28 days.**
 - **First dose was given no earlier than 4 days before the student's first birthday.**
- Protects against **measles, mumps, and rubella** infection.
- Measles is the most contagious virus in the world. About 90% of those exposed to measles will get infected if they are unvaccinated.
- Long-term effects of measles can include organ damage, intellectual disability, dangerous brain swelling, deafness, and immune system damage.

Meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY)

- Applies to new students who are or will be residing in student housing.
- **Students are required to have received the MenACWY vaccine(s) on or after their 16th birthday, and within the last five years.**
- Protects against meningococcal infection, such as **meningitis** and **septicaemia**, which can become deadly in a matter of hours.
- About 1 to 2 people in 10 with meningococcal meningitis will die from the infection.
- 1 in 5 people infected with meningitis will experience long-term effects such as loss of limbs, hearing loss, seizures, and cognitive impairment.

Between 2015 to 2018, the incidence of invasive meningococcal disease for college students aged 18 to 24 years old in the US was nearly double the incidence for non-college students.

Your college, university, or technical school may have immunization requirement policies that are not mentioned in Colorado state law. Always check with your school about their specific policies!

What about vaccine *recommendations*?

Although you may not need them to enroll in college or university, recommended vaccines are the best way that students can protect themselves from potentially life-threatening illnesses. See the updated [Immunization Recommendations for College Students Guidelines 2026](#) from the American College Health Association.

How can I access my immunization records?

New college students will need to provide their school with proof of required immunizations, so it's important to know how to access your immunization records. Your record will also show when you are due for your next vaccine(s), so you can stay up to date!

Immunization Information Systems (IIS): Most US states and jurisdictions have their own IIS, which records every vaccine a person has received throughout their lifetime.



Students from Colorado can request their immunization records here:
<https://cdphe.colorado.gov/immunization/copy-of-records>



Out-Of-State Students can request their records here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/iis/contact-s-locate-records/index.html>



International Students should contact their immunization provider or previous school to obtain records.

Where can I get vaccinated?

The Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE) has resources for locating no- and low-cost vaccines near you: <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/immunizations/get-vaccinated>.

Additionally, you can find a vaccine clinic here: <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/find-a-vaccine-clinic>.

Be sure to check your on-campus health center for vaccines, too. Vaccines are usually covered by insurance here.

What about vaccine exemptions?

Students can opt out of receiving these vaccines for medical or personal reasons. But remember, these diseases can be dangerous and even deadly. Not being vaccinated could mean prolonged exclusion from class and other school activities in the case of an outbreak.

Sources:

[Immunization requirements for entry into college and university - CDPHE](#)

[Immunization Records - Immunize for Good](#)

[Meningococcus: The Disease and Vaccines - CHOP](#)

[Measles Outbreaks on College Campuses - ACHA](#)

Schaffer DeRoo S, Torres RG, Fu LY. Meningococcal disease and vaccination in college students. Hum Vaccin Immunother. 2021 Nov 2;17(11):4675-4688.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8828137/#s0004>



IMMUNIZE COLORADO