

**New Immunization Requirement Beginning Fall 2020**  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**  
Revised July 2023

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**What is meningococcal disease?**

Meningococcal disease is a serious illness caused by a type of bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. It can lead to meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and infections of the blood. Meningococcal disease often occurs without warning — even among people who are otherwise healthy.

An estimated 1,000 people get meningococcal disease each year in the U.S., with 130 to 200 of them in California. After infancy, older adolescents and young adults have the highest rate of meningococcal disease. Students under age 21 living in residential halls (dormitories) are particularly at risk.

Even if treated, 10-15% of people who get meningococcal disease will die from it. Of the survivors, about 10-20% suffer lifelong disabilities such as hearing loss, brain damage, kidney damage, amputations, nervous system problems, or severe scars from skin grafts. Meningococcal disease can spread from person to person through close contact (coughing or kissing) or lengthy contact, especially among people living in the same household or in close quarters (residential settings such as dormitories or military barracks).

There are at least 12 types of *N. meningitidis*, called “serogroups.” Serogroups A, B, C, W, and Y cause most meningococcal disease.

**Why are there 2 vaccines for meningococcal disease?**

CDC first recommended adolescents/young adults get the conjugate, or MCV4, vaccine in 2005. This vaccine covers 4 serotypes of meningococcal disease (A, C, W-135, and Y). Since then, rates of meningococcal disease in adolescents and young adults caused by these serogroups has decreased by over 90%. Unfortunately, there has been an emergence of meningococcal disease caused by serogroup B so the MenB vaccine was developed in 2014.

While any adolescent/young adult may choose to get a MenB vaccine, the CDC recommends that certain individuals get it if they: have a rare type of immune disorder called complement component deficiency, are taking a type of medicine called a complement inhibitor (for example, Soliris® or Ultomiris®), have a damaged spleen or their spleen has been removed, or are part of a population identified to be at increased risk because of a serogroup B meningococcal disease outbreak.

**Why are these vaccines being required now?**

There have been numerous meningococcal outbreaks at California universities in recent years including a local university in San Diego. Due to the proximity of the local university, USD and other local colleges/university students are considered at increased risk. The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency has recommended that all local San Diego universities and colleges adopt these vaccination policy changes to assist with prevention of future outbreaks of meningococcal disease.

### **What are the specifics about the requirements?**

The new requirements are for new, incoming undergraduate students (under the age of 23) starting in Fall 2020 or after. As with all other immunization requirements, there is a registration hold in place until the requirements are met.

There are three FDA approved MCV4 vaccines called MenQuadfi, Menactra and Menveo. Students need to show proof of one of these vaccines received after the age of 16.

There are two FDA approved MenB vaccines called Trumenba and Bexero. A series of 2 vaccines of one of them is needed. These vaccines are not interchangeable and a series needs to be completed with the same vaccine.

- Bexsero. Two doses at least 1 month apart.
- Trumenba. Two doses at least 6 months apart. (If the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose is given before 6 months, a 3<sup>rd</sup> dose is needed at least 4 months after the 2<sup>nd</sup>)

### **Will the vaccines be covered by my insurance?**

Most private health insurance plans cover these vaccines. Check with your insurance provider for details on whether there is any cost to you. Ask your insurance provider for a list of in-network vaccine providers.

The Vaccine for Children (VFC) Program provides vaccines to children whose parents or guardians may not be able to afford them. A child is eligible if they are younger than 19 years old and meet one of the following requirements:

- Medicaid-eligible
- Uninsured
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Underinsured (have health insurance that does not cover vaccines or does not cover certain vaccines)

If your child is VFC-eligible, ask if your clinician is a VFC provider. For help in finding a VFC provider near you, contact your state or local health department's [VFC Program Coordinator](#). You can also call CDC at 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636).

### **Where can I get the vaccines?**

You can typically get vaccines from your primary care provider. Additionally, many pharmacies such as Walgreens, CVS, etc. can administer vaccines and bill your insurance. The Student Health Center (SHC) does have the vaccines available. The cost at the SHC are between \$200 per vaccine. If you have the student insurance through the university, the health center can bill this insurance directly resulting in no cost to the student. If you do not have the student insurance, you can attempt to submit a receipt to your insurance company for reimbursement, but payment to the SHC is due at time of service.

### **More questions?**

You can get more information by visiting <https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/index.html>