

State of Tennessee Mandated Immunization Requirements  
Hepatitis B and Meningococcal Vaccines

**Tennessee Law:**

The State of Tennessee requires that all new entering students at both public and private institutions of higher education (including Vanderbilt) within the state receive **both the hepatitis B vaccine and the meningococcal vaccine** or that they **sign and submit a signed waiver** acknowledging that they recognize the dangers of these diseases, that they know that effective vaccines are available and that they chose not to receive the vaccines. The **meningococcal vaccine or waiver** requirement is limited to students who will be living in on campus housing.

**Rationale:**

**Hepatitis B Vaccine** – Young adults are at increased risk for contracting hepatitis B. The hepatitis B virus can cause acute hepatitis, severe chronic hepatitis and even liver failure in some individuals. It has also been associated with liver cancer. Therefore, the hepatitis B vaccine can prevent potentially life-threatening liver infections and some forms of liver cancer. The vaccine is highly effective and safe.

**Meningococcal Vaccine** – College students living on campus are at increased risk for meningococcal disease and first year students living on-campus are at the highest risk. Acute meningococcal meningitis or meningococemic (blood infection) can cause severe invasive illness and death within 24-48 hours. The initial symptoms are similar to those of influenza and thus a delay in diagnosis can occur. Therefore, the vaccine can prevent several types of dangerous and potentially fatal meningococcal disease.

**Tennessee Vaccination Requirements:**

**Hepatitis B Vaccine** – The hepatitis B vaccine requires three (3) injections. It is given at time 0 (*first injection*), at 1 month after the first injection (*second injection*) and at 6 months after the first injection (*third injection*). The vaccine is available in most physicians' offices and at most health departments. It is also available at the Vanderbilt Student Health Center. Protection is thought to be life-long but booster injections could be necessary. A signed waiver is acceptable.

**Meningococcal Vaccine** – The meningococcal vaccine is a 1 dose vaccine. Protection lasts for approximately 3-5 years and protective antibodies develop within two-three weeks after the injection. The vaccine protects against serogroups A, C, Y and W-135 and is available in many physicians' offices, some health departments and it can be obtained at the Vanderbilt Student Health Center. A signed waiver is acceptable.

**Measles Mumps and Rubella** – All students born after January 1, 1957 must be vaccinated with **TWO** doses of Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine - according to TN State Law Chapter 1200-14-1-29. The **TWO MMR** vaccine requirement **cannot** be waived.

If you would like more information on either of these preventable diseases, please contact your local physician or health department, visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) web site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call the Vanderbilt Student Health Service at (615) 322-2427.