

Meningitis Vaccination

Meningitis Vaccine Requirement

First-time, transferring, or returning students at Lee College may be required to show evidence of vaccination against bacterial meningitis. The requirement is due to a mandate put forth in Texas Senate Bill 1107, passed in 2011 and updated by Senate Bill 62 in 2013. The initial bacterial meningitis vaccination or booster dose must be administered within the five years immediately preceding enrollment, and at least 10 days prior to the start date of classes for the term.

Meningitis is a very serious, often fatal, disease that may easily spread in the college environment. We are committed to taking precautions to protect the health and well-being of our students.

For more on the disease and requirement, see <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/college-requirements.aspx>. The following are the only acceptable forms of evidence to show you have been vaccinated or received a booster:

- The signature or stamp of a physician or health practitioner on a form that shows the month, day, and year the vaccine was administered OR
- An official immunization record generated from a state or local health authority OR
- An official record received from school officials, including a record from another state.

Unless you meet one of the conditions below, you **MUST** submit your immunization record or an official exemption document in order to register for classes.

You do **NOT** have to comply if you are ...

- Age 22 or older
- Registered **ONLY** in online classes
- Participating in Community Education (non-credit) training totaling less than 360 contact hours in a semester
- Enrolled in dual credit courses taught at a public or private K-12 facility not on the college campus
- Incarcerated and receiving education at a prison facility

Lee College is required to inform you that there are authorized exemptions from the requirement even if you are subject to it.

- A note signed by a physician who is duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the U.S., stating that, in the physician's opinion, the required vaccination for bacterial meningitis would be injurious to your health and well-being (must be on letterhead stationery – name & phone number of M.D. are required) OR
- A state-authorized form indicating student's objection to getting the vaccination, for reasons of conscience. Form must be printed from <https://co-request-jc.dshs.texas.gov/>.

Getting the shot

The vaccination is available at many doctor's offices, retail pharmacies, and public health clinics. Students are urged to seek the vaccination well before registration deadlines, using their health insurance plans). Students with no insurance are urged to compare costs between providers. Students 18 and under may be able to receive the shot free or at a reduced cost at a public clinic. Generally, public clinics will not immunize anyone older than 18.

Important Information about Bacterial Meningitis

This information is being provided to all new college students in the state of Texas. Bacterial Meningitis is a serious, potentially deadly disease that can progress extremely fast – so take the utmost caution. It is an inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. The bacteria that cause meningitis can also infect the blood. The disease strikes about 3,000 Americans annually, including 100-125 on college campuses, leading to 5-15 deaths among college students every year. There is a treatment, but those who survive might develop severe health problems or disabilities.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- High fever
- Severe headache
- Rash or purple patches on skin
- Vomiting
- Light sensitivity
- Stiff neck
- Confusion and sleepiness
- Nausea
- Lethargy
- Seizures

There may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots caused by bleeding under the skin. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The more symptoms, the higher the risk, so when these symptoms appear seek immediate medical attention.

HOW IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS DIAGNOSED?

- Diagnosis is made by a medical provider and is usually based on a combination of clinical symptoms and laboratory results from spinal fluid and blood tests.
- Early diagnosis and treatment can greatly improve the likelihood of recovery.

HOW IS THE DISEASE TRANSMITTED?

- The disease is transmitted when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, or by sharing drinking containers, utensils, cigarettes, toothbrushes, etc.) or come in contact with respiratory or throat secretions.

HOW DO YOU INCREASE YOUR RISK OF GETTING BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?

- Exposure to saliva by sharing cigarettes, water bottles, eating utensils, food, kissing, etc.
- Living in close conditions (such as sharing a room/suite in a dorm or group home).

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISEASE?

- Death (in 8 to 24 hours from perfectly well to dead)
- Permanent brain damage
- Kidney failure
- Learning disability
- Hearing loss, blindness
- Limb damage (fingers, toes, arms, legs) that requires amputation
- Gangrene
- Coma
- Convulsions

CAN THE DISEASE BE TREATED?

- Antibiotic treatment, if received early, can save lives and chances of recovery are increased. However, permanent disability or death can still occur.
- Vaccinations are available and should be considered for:
 - Those living in close quarters
 - College students 25 years old or younger
- Vaccinations are effective against 4 of the 5 most common bacterial types that cause 70 percent of the disease in the U.S. (but does not protect against all types of meningitis).
- Vaccinations take 7-10 days to become effective, with protection lasting 3-5 years.
- The cost of vaccine varies, so check with your health care provider.
- Vaccination is very safe – the most common side effects are redness and minor pain at injection site for up to two days.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE INFORMATION?

- Contact your own health care provider.
- Contact the Baytown Health Department (281.420.5384), the Harris County Health Department (281.427.5195), or use the search for services feature by calling 211 on your phone, or visit <https://www.211texas.org/>.

Contact website:

- acha.org

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