

# Bacterial Meningitis Vaccination Requirement

As of Oct. 1, 2013, Texas state law requires the following:

All entering students under 22 years of age must provide documentation of receiving an initial bacterial meningitis vaccination dose or booster within the last 5 years. This includes all new and transfer students, as well as former students who are re-enrolling after a break in enrollment. Students must show proof of having the vaccination at least 10 days prior to the start of the semester.

Students may get the vaccine at most pharmacies, including all Walgreens' locations in Midland/Odessa. The following is acceptable evidence of vaccination or receiving a booster dose:

- The signature or stamp of a physician or his/her designee, or public health personnel on a form which shows the month, day and year the vaccination dose or booster was administered;
- 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.

Bacterial Meningitis is a serious, potentially deadly disease that can progress extremely fast. It is an inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. The bacteria that cause meningitis can also infect the blood. This 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; however, those that survive might develop severe health problems or disabilities. The disease is transmitted when people exchange saliva (such as kissing, or by sharing drinking containers, utensils, cigarettes, toothbrushes, etc.) or come in contact with respiratory or throat secretions.

More information can be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo)) and the American College Health Association ([www.acha.org](http://www.acha.org)).

## EXEMPTIONS

The law allows for exemptions for

- Students 22 years of age or older
- Students who are enrolled only in online or other distance learning courses.
- Students who submit an affidavit or a certificate signed by a physician who is duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States, in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccination required would be injurious to the health and well-being of the student
- Students who submit an affidavit signed by the student stating that the student declines the vaccination for bacterial meningitis for reasons of conscience, including religious belief. A conscientious exemption form ("Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunizations for Reasons of Conscience") from the Texas Department of State Health Services must be used. **Students under the age of 18 must include the signature of a parent/guardian included on the form.**