

## Meningitis Vaccination and Coverage by Texas Foster Youth Insurances (Medicaid)

Revised November 2015

All students entering a Texas institute of higher education that are under the age of 22 on the first day of the semester must have received the meningococcal (meningitis) vaccine. They must have had the vaccination or booster within the last 5 years. You can read more about this requirement by clicking [here](#).

### For youth 18 years old and younger:

There is no reason a youth cannot get the vaccination well before they turn 18. It is now a required vaccine in Texas for students in 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades (12-16 years). Just be sure there is a vaccination record that can be presented to the college and that the youth has a booster when they are 17 or older. Making sure foster youth get this vaccine well before they turn 18 is critical not only for their health, but it is also to help avoid problems with obtaining payment for the vaccination or lapsed insurance coverage. This should be as much of a part of college planning as taking the ACT or filling out financial aid forms.

### For youth 19 years old and older:

The bacterial meningitis vaccine should be covered by Star Health Medicaid even if you are 19 years old or older.

If you have not received your meningitis shot and you have Foster Youth Medicaid (because you are in extended foster care), Former Foster Care Children's (FFCC) Medicaid, or Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth (MTFCY) program, you should call Star Health at 1-800-218-7453. Ask to speak to a Service Coordinator in the Foster Care Department. Once they have verified that you have not already received the vaccine, they will find a provider so that you can get the bacterial meningitis vaccine you are required to get for school. If they find that you already received the vaccination, they can direct you at how to get a copy of the record.

If you are 21, even if you have Former Foster Care Medicaid, the insurance program you have selected may not cover the vaccination. If you cannot find any immunization record that shows you have the vaccination (check with old high schools and any colleges you attended and your health passport), you will need to pay the cost of the vaccination. If you are enrolled in the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program, you may use part of your ETV living expense stipends if allowed by the university's cost of attendance policy for health insurance, doctor co-payment, prescriptions, or other health expenses. The ETV funds cannot be used to directly pay for a doctor visit. Talk to your PAL caseworker for additional information.

### Meningitis Vaccination Exemption:

There is an exception to the meningitis vaccination requirement that allows for a student to not have to obtain a vaccination for reason of conscience. We do not recommend that students execute an affidavit declining the vaccination for reasons of conscience merely to avoid the vaccination requirement. The vaccination is directed at protecting young adults from a deadly and devastating illness that they are at increased risk of contracting in the communal college setting. However, should a young adult want to claim an exemption, they must take certain steps. You can find more information about claiming an exemption by clicking [here](#). Don't wait until the last minute to try to claim an exemption.

If a student has an exemption and is not vaccinated, they must understand that they could be kept off campus during a disaster or public health emergency, terrorist attack, hostile military or paramilitary action, or extraordinary law enforcement emergency declared by an appropriate official or authority from the Texas Department of State Health Services. A public health emergency might be declared if one or two students get meningitis as health officials take meningitis very seriously.

**Links:**

- [Texas College Vaccine Requirements](#)
- [Texas School & Child-Care Facility Requirements regarding immunizations](#)