

Staying healthy while studying

Immunisation information for tertiary students in Aotearoa New Zealand

Staying healthy while studying is important. Serious illness can significantly affect your ability to complete your studies.

In New Zealand, many vaccine-preventable diseases are well controlled through the National Immunisation Programme. However, students enrolled in tertiary study – particularly those living in student accommodation – may be at increased risk of some infections, including measles, influenza, COVID-19 and meningococcal disease.

Students are encouraged to ensure they are **up-to-date with all recommended vaccinations** before starting their studies. If you are unsure about your immunisation history, speak with your healthcare provider or visit your student health service on campus. For some courses, you may be required to provide **evidence of immunisation or serological (blood test) proof of immunity** before you can attend classes or undertake clinical placements.

For New Zealand residents and students eligible for publicly funded healthcare services, some vaccines may be **available free of charge** through a healthcare provider (general practice or community pharmacy). Other vaccines may involve a cost. International students will generally need to pay for vaccines.

RECOMMENDED IMMUNISATIONS FOR ADULTS AGED 18 YEARS AND OVER

Tetanus and diphtheria

Three documented doses of a tetanus- and diphtheria-containing vaccine.

Pertussis (whooping cough)

At least one documented dose of a pertussis-containing vaccine every 10 years for individuals who are in contact with babies or young children.

Polio

Three documented doses of a polio-containing vaccine (oral polio vaccine [OPV] or inactivated polio vaccine [IPV]).

Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)

Two documented doses of MMR vaccine for individuals born on or after 1 January 1969. The first dose should have been given at 12 months of age or older.

Human papillomavirus (HPV)

Two or three documented doses of HPV vaccine. The number of doses required depends on the age at which vaccination was started. (Funded up to 27 years of age for NZ residents and students eligible for publicly funded healthcare services).

Hepatitis B

Two or three documented doses of hepatitis B vaccine for students at increased risk of exposure to hepatitis B infection. The number of doses required depends on the age at which vaccination was started.

Influenza

Annual influenza (flu) immunisation provides the best protection. Influenza is different from and more severe than the common cold. Antibiotics do not work for influenza or common colds.

Meningococcal vaccines

Meningitis and septicaemia (blood poisoning) are rare but life-threatening diseases caused by several groups of meningococcal bacteria. Tertiary students have an increased risk of meningococcal disease, especially if living in student accommodation, including a university hall of residence, and have close contact with other students.

Meningococcal ACWY

A single dose is recommended and funded for eligible individuals aged 13–25 years who will be living in university halls of residence, or other specified close-living settings, either within the next three months or during their first year in that accommodation.

Meningococcal B

Two doses are recommended and funded for eligible individuals aged 13–25 years who will be living in university halls of residence, or other specified close-living settings, either within the next three months or during their first year in that accommodation. *Note:* If you were vaccinated with MeNZB between 2004–2008, you will no longer have protection against meningococcal B.

COVID-19

Check current COVID-19 vaccine recommendations.

Chickenpox (varicella)

Complications of chickenpox can be severe, especially in adolescents and adults. Students who have no history of chickenpox disease (e.g., those born and raised in tropical countries) or chickenpox immunisation are recommended to receive two doses of varicella vaccine at least 6 weeks apart.

More details on National Immunisation Schedule vaccines can be found here:
healthnz.govt.nz/health-topics/immunisations/vaccines-aotearoa

Catch-up immunisations

Catch-up immunisations can be arranged at your healthcare provider or student health service for students who have missed some immunisations or have not previously been immunised. Some vaccines may be provided free (funded).

Students enrolled in clinical education programmes

Some study programmes and occupations increase the risk of contracting and transmitting infectious diseases that can be prevented through immunisation.

Students who will have direct contact with patients or clients in healthcare settings, work with young children or animals, or handle materials that may transmit infection may be at increased risk of exposure to serious and potentially life-threatening diseases.

For this reason, these students may be required to have additional immunisations to protect themselves and the people they work with.

Students enrolled in study programmes where there is an increased risk of contracting and transmitting infectious diseases may be required to provide evidence of immunity to certain vaccine-preventable diseases.

The requirements for determining immune status (such as documented vaccination records or serological evidence of immunity) may vary depending on the disease, vaccine, and specific study programme. Detailed information about these requirements will be provided by the relevant department or programme.

Note: Students who are unable to provide evidence of immunity, or who do not complete the required immunisations and/or screening, may not be permitted to attend clinical placements. Students in this situation should contact their tertiary institution or programme department as soon as possible to discuss their options.

[auckland.ac.nz/en/study/applications-and-admissions/enrolment/choosing-your-courses/enrolling-in-clinical-programmes/immunisation-clinical-programmes.html](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/study/applications-and-admissions/enrolment/choosing-your-courses/enrolling-in-clinical-programmes/immunisation-clinical-programmes.html)

Caring for yourself and others

Lifestyle habits that can help you stay well

- Wash your hands regularly with soap or use hand sanitiser, especially before eating and after using bathrooms/toilets
- Do not share drink bottles or vapes
- Eat healthy food, including fruit and vegetables
- Limit alcohol intake and do not smoke
- Get plenty of sleep and exercise
- Manage stress and seek support when needed.

If you are unwell

- Make sure other people (e.g., family member, flatmate, friend or hostel staff) are aware you are unwell and can assist you if needed. Contact your healthcare provider or student health service on campus promptly when required
- Stay at home and rest in a separate, well-ventilated room away from other people
- Wash your hands with soap or use hand sanitiser, especially before using shared areas such as kitchens and bathrooms
- Cough and sneeze into disposable tissues or the inside of your elbow.

***Anyone can call Healthline on 0800 611 116 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
for free health or illness-related advice or information.***