



MEDICINE HAT
COLLEGE

Immunization

Frequently Asked Questions



Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps

Why Do I Need to Be Immunized?

- Students in healthcare or community service programs are at risk of exposure to communicable diseases.
- Immunization protects both students and the patients they care for, and it's a required part of infection prevention and control.

Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps



Immunization Documentation is Mandatory

- All students must submit their immunization documents to immunizations@mhc.ab.ca by the deadline in the orientation package.
- You must submit documentation even if you are not fully immunized.
- Failure to submit documentation will result in a **hold** on your student account.
- Holds will be lifted only once documentation is received.

Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps

Refusal Consequences

- You may choose to decline any vaccine.
- However, clinical practice partners may refuse entry if you are not immunized for the outbreak-related or recommended infection (e.g., influenza, COVID-19).
- **Alternative placements will not be arranged** if a site refuses entry due to vaccination status.
- This may result in:
 - Being unsuccessful in your course.
 - Delayed program progression.

Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps

What is the role of students in this process?

- Students must:
 - Provide immunization records upon admission.
 - Complete immunizations in a timely manner.
 - Maintain personal records.
 - Respond to follow-up or booster dose requests.

Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps

Who is responsible for tracking and ensuring that students are immunized?

- The post-secondary institution (Medicine Hat College) is accountable for assessing immunization status and ensuring compliance.
- Student must submit documentation and follow through with recommended vaccines.

Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps

What immunizations do I need for clinical or practicum?

- Health care students are required to submit their immunization record for review by the immunization coordinator.
- All health care students are strongly recommended to be fully immunized according to AHS Standards.
- Standard for Immunization of Post-Secondary Health Care Students and Students in Other High-Risk Occupational Programs

Immunization Recommended for Healthcare Students and Students in Other High-Risk Occupational Programs				
Disease	Vaccine(s)	Acronym	Indication	Recommended Doses
Tetanus Diphtheria Pertussis	Adacel Boostrix	Tdap	All healthcare students and students in other high-risk occupational programs.	<p>No documented history of primary series, complete a primary series of 3 doses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Day 04 to 8 weeks after first dose6 to 12 months after second dose. <p>Documented history of primary series:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reinforcing dose of tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis vaccine every 10 years. <p>No documented history of a dose of acellular pertussis vaccine as an adult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 dose of Tdap regardless of the interval since the last dose of tetanus containing vaccine.
Measles	MMR II Priorix	MMR	<p>All post-secondary healthcare students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Without documentation of 2 valid doses of measles-containing vaccine or without documented laboratory confirmed measles disease or serological evidence of measles immunity (measles IgG positive).¹ <p>All other post-secondary students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Born in 1970 or later without documentation of 2 valid doses of measles-containing vaccine or without documented laboratory confirmed measles disease or serological evidence of measles immunity (measles IgG positive).¹Born prior to 1970 without documentation of 1 valid dose of measles-containing vaccine or without documented laboratory confirmed measles disease or serological evidence of immunity (measles IgG positive).¹	<p>All post-secondary healthcare students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">2 doses of measles-containing vaccine after 12 months of age.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Follow recommended minimum intervals for the specific vaccine. <p>All other post-secondary students born in 1970 or later:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">2 doses of measles-containing vaccine after 12 months of age.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Follow recommended minimum intervals for the specific vaccine. <p>All other post-secondary students born prior to 1970:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 dose of measles-containing vaccine after 12 months of age.

Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps

Immunizations Strongly Recommended for Health Care Students include:

Immunizations

- Tetanus/Diphtheria/Acellular Pertussis (Tdap)
- Polio (IPV)
- Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- Influenza
- Covid-19

Tests

- Tuberculin Skin Test (TST)
- Hepatitis B blood test (if needed)
- Varicella blood test (if needed)
- Chest x-ray/Tb Clearance letter (if needed)

Note: Students may be refused from entering sites on outbreak if not currently vaccinated resulting in a delay in progression of their studies.

Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps

What are the first steps in completing vaccinations?

1. Request your immunization history from your provincial public health office.
2. Present your records to Alberta Community Health Services public health office for review and verification.
 - Local Offices: [Medicine Hat](#)/[Brooks](#)
3. Book an appointment with a public health nurse to complete any outstanding recommended vaccinations.
 - Identify yourself as a Post-Secondary Health Care Student

Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps

What if I was vaccinated outside of Alberta or Canada?

1. Request your vaccination record from the province/country of origin.
2. Bring any existing vaccination records to a public health office in Alberta for review and verification.
3. Book an appointment with Public Health to have a Post-Secondary Health Care Student Assessment.

Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps

What if I do not have any previous immunization records?

1. Do not worry!
2. Book an appointment with Public Health (refer to slide 6) to have a Post-Secondary Health Care Student Assessment.
3. The public health nurse will offer any eligible vaccines free of charge.

Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps

What if no records of immunizations are available from my country of birth?

1. Do not worry!
2. Book an appointment with Public Health after receiving your Alberta Health Card.
3. Public Health will offer and provide all required/recommended vaccinations/tests free of charge.

Getting Started: Requirements & First Steps

What happens at my first appointment?



At your first appointment with Public Health, the nurse will complete a Post-Secondary Health Care Student Assessment.



You will be offered any outstanding recommended vaccines.



The nurse will “plant” the Tuberculosis Skin Test (TST).



The nurse will provide you with a lab requisition for Hep B Serology and Varicella Serology (if needed).



If a positive serology report for Varicella exists in your file, the nurse will provide a copy of that result.

Submitting Documents

How do I submit my documents?

Please include:

- Name (First and Last)
- Program
- Year of Admission

- ✓ Email to immunizations@mhc.ab.ca
- ✓ Remember to keep a copy for your personal records!

Submitting Documents

What documents do I need to submit?

- ✓ AHS Client Immunization Record (Official Immunization Record)
- ✓ Proof of Influenza/Covid Vaccination (if received)
- ✓ Tb Skin Test result in mm
- ✓ Tb Follow-up documentation (if positive/significant TST)
- ✓ Hep B Serology documentation (if applicable)
- ✓ Varicella Serology documentation (if applicable)

Submitting Documents

What happens if I don't submit my immunization documents by the start of term?

- A hold will be placed on your student account, and you may be unable to access course materials or attend clinical until documentation is submitted.

What happens if my immunizations are not complete by the time clinical starts?

- Students may still attend classes/clinical if they are in the process of completing their immunizations.

How does the Tuberculosis Skin Test work?

At your first appointment, the nurse will “plant” the Tuberculosis Skin Test (TST).

At your second appointment, the Public Health Nurse will “read” your Tuberculosis Skin Test (TST).

- If positive/significant, the Public Health Nurse will provide a chest x-ray requisition and a sputum collection kit.

After your second appointment, please request your Immunization Record and email it to immunizations@mhc.ab.ca

What if my Tuberculosis Skin Test is positive?

1. Follow up by Public Health is strongly recommended.
2. You will need to provide proper follow up documentation from Public Health.



What is proper follow up documentation after a positive/significant tuberculosis skin test?

- ✓ It refers to a “clearance letter” from the public health nurse or treating Physician stating that proper tuberculosis protocols have been completed, and you are clear to attend clinical.
- ✓ Please request this letter from the public health nurse if applicable.



How do I get Hepatitis B Serology?

If the public health nurse considers that you are eligible for Hep B Serology:

1. The nurse will provide you with a lab requisition during your appointment.
2. Bring the lab requisition and your AB Health care card to the Laboratory Patient Collection Site (44 Carry Drive SE, Medicine Hat) or book an appointment to complete bloodwork.
3. Results can take up to 2 weeks.
4. Follow up with public health if you have not received your results in two weeks.

What do I need for Varicella documentation?

You need **one** of the following four options:

1. Two documented doses of varicella vaccine.
2. Self-reported or physician diagnosed varicella disease in Canada before January 2001.
3. Physician diagnosed shingles disease (confirmed by physician's office).
4. Laboratory evidence of immunity (positive serology or swab results).

How do I complete Varicella serology?

If the public health nurse considers that you are eligible for Varicella serology:

1. The nurse will provide you with a lab requisition during your appointment.
2. Bring the lab requisition and your AB Health care card to the Laboratory Patient Collection Site (44 Carry Drive SE, Medicine Hat) or book an appointment to complete bloodwork.
3. Results can take up to 2 weeks.
4. Follow up with public health if you have not received your results in two weeks.

Special Circumstances

What if I am in an online program and I will be completing clinical/practicum at a province different from Alberta?

- ✓ If you will be located in Alberta, a Post-Secondary Health Care Student Assessment must be completed by public health, based on Alberta's standards.
- ✓ If you will be completing clinical, practicum, or field work experiences in another province, you must comply with that province's Health Care Students' Immunization requirements.
- ✓ It is still a requirement that you submit your immunization records to Immunizations@mhc.ab.ca

What happens if a student refuses immunization?

- Refusal of immunizations (including influenza or COVID-19) may result in being ineligible for clinical, practicum, or field work experiences.
- This may result in a student being unsuccessful in the course and delayed program progression.
- The immunization coordinator will document the refusal in your student documents.

Refusals, Charges, and Seasonal Vaccines

Are students charged for immunizations?

- No.
- Vaccines recommended for occupational health reasons are free to students, as per Alberta's Communicable Disease Regulation.
- However, fees may apply for administration, lab work, or assessments by third-party providers.

Refusals, Charges, and Seasonal Vaccines

Is the influenza/COVID vaccine mandatory each year?

- It is strongly recommended annually, particularly for health care students working in patient care settings.
- Some sites may require it for placement eligibility during flu season.

Refusals, Charges, and Seasonal Vaccines

What happens if there is an outbreak while I am in a practical course?

- In the event of an outbreak, the clinical site will decide whether students without the related immunization may continue in placement.
- Even if the vaccine is not required by the program, the site may refuse entry.
- Alternative placements will **not** be arranged for students whose vaccination status does not meet the clinical site's requirements.
- This may delay program progression.

Refusals, Charges, and Seasonal Vaccines

How do I obtain my Influenza vaccine in the Spring/Summer?

- Please wait until the Fall/Flu season. Influenza vaccine will be available at that time.
- Book an appointment, or walk-in to a clinic/pharmacy offering these services.
- Email proof of your influenza vaccination to immunizations@mhc.ab.ca



Final Reminders & Resources

Still Have Questions?

- ✓ Check out our website:
https://www.mhc.ab.ca/ProgramsandCourses/Academic-Programs/School_HCS
- ✓ Email specific detailed questions to
immunizations@mhc.ab.ca
- ✓ [Medicine Hat Community Health Services](#)
- ✓ [Brooks Health Centre](#)
- ✓ Reminder: Keep a copy of your immunization documents!

