

Health Care Professional Programs

Proof of immunity to measles, mumps, rubella and varicella is a mandatory requirement for students in Health Professional Programs at McMaster University. Immunization schedules have changed over the years, so it is important for students to locate their records.

Individuals born before 1970 are likely immune to measles, mumps, and rubella due to naturally acquired infection. Most students born in Canada will have received one or two MMR vaccines (measles-mumps-rubella) in the past (introduced in Canada in 1975), and possibly one measles-only vaccine (administered in schools in Ontario in 1996). Individuals with a history of chicken pox or shingles are likely immune to varicella due to naturally acquired infection. Students may have received one or two varicella vaccines in the past (introduced in Canada between 2000 and 2007 depending on the province or territory; a 2-dose series is publicly funded in Ontario for individuals born after Jan 1, 2000).

**Proof of immunity for health care workers/learners requires ONE of:**

**Measles, Mumps, Varicella:**

- Documentation of vaccination with 2 doses of vaccine spaced at least 28 days apart, age 12 months or older, **OR**
- Laboratory evidence of immunity (positive IgG antibody), **OR**
- Documented laboratory confirmed infection

**Rubella:**

- Documentation of vaccination with one dose of rubella-containing vaccine, age 12 months or older, **OR**
- Laboratory evidence of immunity (positive rubella IgG antibody), **OR**
- Documented laboratory confirmed infection

Vaccination for measles, mumps and rubella with two MMR vaccines is recommended, regardless of age. Booster doses after age appropriate vaccination are not necessary. Serologic testing is not recommended before or after receiving a measles-mumps-rubella-containing vaccine. If serology is inadvertently done subsequent to appropriate immunization and does not demonstrate immunity, re-immunization is not necessary.

Booster doses of rubella-containing vaccine after documented receipt of one dose of rubella-containing vaccine are not necessary; however, if a booster dose is given, it is not harmful and may benefit individuals who did not respond to primary immunization.

Booster doses beyond the two recommended doses of varicella-containing vaccines are not necessary. Although useful for establishing immunity to varicella after naturally acquired infection, commercially available varicella antibody tests may not have sufficient sensitivity to detect antibody after vaccination. Previously vaccinated individuals who are inadvertently tested are likely to be immune to varicella, even if there is no detectable antibody.

**28-day rule:** Tuberculin skin tests (TST) must be given either BEFORE or at least 28 days AFTER a live vaccine (MMR, Varicella). MMR vaccines must be spaced at least 28 days apart. Varicella vaccines must be spaced at least 28 days apart. MMR and Varicella vaccines may be given at the same time at different sites (MMRV vaccine is not authorized for age 13 years or older), otherwise they must be spaced at least 28 days apart.

**Questions?** Contact the Health Screening Office: MDCL 3514, hrsadmin@mcmaster.ca, 905-525-9140 ext 22249

For more information, click on the following links:

[Canadian Immunization Guide - Measles](#)

[Canadian Immunization Guide - Mumps](#)

[Canadian Immunization Guide - Rubella](#)

[Canadian Immunization Guide - Varicella](#)