

**11TH Grade Meningococcal Conjugate
Vaccine (MCV4) Booster Dose
Requirement**

Guidance for School Assessment

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1) What is the new vaccination requirement for students entering 11th grade in Georgia?

Effective July 1, 2021, children 16 years of age and older, who are entering the 11th grade (including new entrants), must have received one booster dose of the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4), unless their initial dose was administered on or after their 16th birthday. Proof of vaccination must be documented on the Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231).

2) Who is affected by the new 11th grade vaccination requirement?

All public and private schools are affected by the law, including but not limited to:

- Charter schools
- Community schools
- Juvenile court schools
- Other alternative school settings (excluding homeschool)

Students who are affected by the law include but are not limited to:

- International or exchange students
- Children in foster care (see pg. 11)
- Homeless students (see pg. 10)
- Students transferring from outside of Georgia to a school in Georgia at any time during the school year
- Students whose parent or guardian serves in the United States Military

Students who are NOT affected but who are strongly recommended to receive the meningococcal vaccination:

- Home school students

3) If a student is going to do virtual learning only, and not actually “attending” school physically, do they still have to have an up-to-date immunization record?

Yes, Official Code of Georgia Section 20-1-771(b) states that "No child shall be admitted to or attend any school or facility in this state unless the child shall first have submitted a certificate of immunization to the responsible official of the school or facility. " The words "admit", and "attend" are not dependent on the location of the child during instruction, be it at home (virtual/remote/distance learning) or on school grounds. A certificate of immunization is required if the child has been entered onto the school roll or takes advantage of its programs, even though instruction may be provided through virtual means.

4) Are out of state transfer students subject to the new 11th grade vaccination requirement?

Yes, all new entrants entering the 11th and 12th grade are subject to the new meningococcal conjugate vaccination requirement.

A new entrant is defined as any child entering a school in Georgia for the first time or any child re-entering a Georgia school after being absent from school for more than twelve months or one calendar school year.

5) I have discovered that some new entrants attending the 11th and 12th grade at my school have not yet met the new 11th grade requirement but were mistakenly thought to have done so. What should I do?

Notify the parents or guardians and inform them that the new student is required to meet the MCV4 vaccination requirement and, after 30 school days from the notification, the student may be excluded until the requirement is met. (O.C.G.A § 20-2-771 (b))

6) What vaccines are necessary to meet the 11th grade booster dose vaccination requirement?

There are three meningococcal conjugate vaccines that meet the 11th grade booster dose vaccination requirement: Menveo (MenACWY-CRM), Menactra (MenACWY-D), and MenQuadfi (MenACWY-TT)

Meningococcal Conjugate Requirement		
Meets the Requirement	Vaccine	When given?
YES , meets the requirement	MCV4 (Menactra, Menveo, MenQuadfi)	Given on or after the 16 th birthday
NO , does not meet requirement	MCV4 (Menactra, Menveo, MenQuadfi)	Given before the 16 th birthday
NO , does not meet requirement	MPSV4 (Menomune)	The manufacturer discontinued production of Menomune in 2017. The last lots expired in September 2017
NO , does not meet requirement	History of meningitis; Results of blood tests for immunity to meningitis	

7) What if a student received a MCV4 shot prior to their 16th birthday?

If a dose of MCV4 was given at age 13-15 years, a booster dose should be administered at age 16 years, with a minimum interval of 8 weeks from the previous dose. If the student was vaccinated at age 15 years 11 months, you should wait at least 8 weeks and then give the booster dose at age 16 years 1 month or later.

8) What happens if a student enters 11th grade prior to their 16th birthday and will not turn 16 years old during their 11th grade year?

Students who are less than 16 years of age during their 11th grade year will be “grandfathered” in and will not have to obtain a new certificate. These students should be encouraged to get the required booster dose when they reach 16 years of age.

9) Do we need to reprint certificates for students who are 15 years old entering the 11th grade, but will turn 16 years old before the end of the school year?

Yes, to capture those students who will turn 16 years old during their 11th grade year reprint their certificates after July 1st with the updated expiration date and flag for notification.

10) Instead of getting a meningococcal vaccination to meet the requirement, can a student get a blood test to check for protection (immunity) against meningitis?

No. Testing for immunity to meningococcal disease is not reliable and will not meet the school requirement.

11) What if a student received one dose of a meningococcal conjugate vaccination after their 16th birthday; do they still need an addition dose?

No, students who receive their first dose of a meningococcal conjugate vaccine at or after 16 years do not need a booster dose.

12) What if a student had meningitis as an infant or child; will they still need to receive the vaccine?

A history of meningitis does not meet the school requirement. The meningococcal vaccination is needed to both protect the student and to meet the school requirement.

13) What are the diseases the MCV4 vaccine protects against?

Quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) protects against 4 strains of the meningococcal bacteria – A, C, W and Y – which cause meningitis.

14) Where can a student get vaccinated?

Children should visit their health care provider to get their MCV4 vaccination. Local Health Departments also offer the MCV4 vaccine. To find a Health Department, please visit <http://dph.georgia.gov/public-health-districts>.

15) Are there other vaccines recommended for preteens and teens?

Yes, preteens and teens are also recommended to receive vaccines against flu (influenza), HPV (human papillomavirus, a cause of cervical cancer), and any vaccine they may have missed during childhood, including two doses of MMR and varicella. The recommended vaccine schedule may be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/child-adolescent.html>. Schools should encourage parents to discuss these vaccinations with their child's health care provider. Health care providers should use every opportunity, including sport physicals, to immunize against these diseases.

16) When should children get vaccinated with the meningococcal conjugate vaccine?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children age 11-12 years be routinely vaccinated with the meningococcal conjugate vaccination (MCV4) and receive a booster dose at age 16 years.

17) Why should children get vaccinated with the meningococcal vaccine?

Meningococcal vaccines help protect against the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease. Meningococcal disease can refer to any illness caused by a type of bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. Meningococcal disease is not very common in the United States, but teens and young adults are at increased risk.

The two most common types of illnesses include infections of the:

- **Lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis)**
- **Bloodstream**

Even with treatment, about 10 to 15 out of 100 people with meningococcal disease will die from it. Meningococcal vaccines are the best way to protect preteens and teens from getting meningococcal disease.

18) What can schools accept as proof of vaccination?

Proof of the meningococcal conjugate booster vaccination dose must be documented on a Georgia immunization certificate (Form 3231).

19) May schools use GRITS to view or print immunization certificates (Form 3231)?

Schools that use GRITS are able to check the records of students whose medical providers also use GRITS. The MCV4 booster requirement documentation is available through GRITS. Schools that do not already use GRITS may inquire with the GRITS Help Desk at (866)-483-2958 about becoming authorized users of GRITS.

20) What should schools do with previous copies of Georgia Immunization Records (Form 3231) when retaining a new copy printed in GRITS for the MCV4 requirement?

Compare the records. If all information on previous copies of the 3231 is found on the new 3231, old copies may be destroyed. If not, or if you are unsure, keep the old copies as well in the permanent record.

21) Does GRITS have immunization records for all students?

Any person who administers a vaccine or vaccines licensed for use by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to a person is required to enter the vaccination into GRITS. However, not all health care providers use GRITS, and some students' records in GRITS are incomplete. GRITS has many records, but not all records.

22) How do I gain access to GRITS?

To gain access to the information in the GRITS system you must contact the GRITS Business Analyst at 404-463-0808 or e-mail dph-gaimmreg@dph.ga.gov.

23) Where may I obtain more information about GRITS?

For more information about GRITS, please visit <http://dph.georgia.gov/georgia-immunization-registry-grits>.

24) Is there a grace period/extension to get the new meningococcal conjugate (MCV4) booster dose vaccination AFTER school starts?

According to Georgia law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-771 (b)), if a child does not have documentation of having received the MCV4 booster dose on or after the child's sixteenth birthday, the responsible official of any school or facility may grant a 30-day waiver of the certification requirement for a justified reason. The waiver may be extended from the date of first admittance or of first attendance, whichever is earlier, for up to 90 days provided documentation is on file at the school or facility from the local health department or a health care provider specifying that a vaccination appointment has been scheduled. The waiver may not be extended beyond 90 days; and upon expiration of the waiver, the child shall not be admitted to or be permitted to attend the school or facility unless the child submits a certificate of immunization.

25) What if the student is homeless and subject to the McKinney-Vento Act?

Children affected by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act are not exempt from the new 11th grade vaccination requirement. GDPH has notified local health departments in Georgia to promptly identify and immunize students affected by the McKinney-Vento Act. GDPH recommends that schools work closely with local health departments as needed to give meningococcal booster vaccinations to unimmunized homeless children. Local health departments can provide information about clinics and other accommodations for urgently needed vaccinations.

Excerpt from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: 42 U.S.C. Section 11432(g):
*“If the child or youth needs to obtain immunizations or immunization or medical records, the enrolling school shall **immediately** refer the parent or guardian of the child or youth to the local educational liaison designated by the school district who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations or immunization or medical records.”*

26) What if the student is in foster care?

Children in foster care are not exempt from the new 11th grade vaccination requirement. Children in foster care who are transferring mid-year from another school in Georgia will have been subject to the 11th grade vaccination requirement at the prior school. GDPH recommends that schools work closely with local health departments as needed to give meningococcal booster vaccines to unimmunized children in foster care. Local health departments can provide information about clinics and other accommodations for urgently needed vaccinations.

27) What about students in special education or children with individualized education programs (IEPs)?

Children in special education and children with IEPs are not exempt from the meningococcal booster vaccination requirement.

28) What exemptions are available under Georgia law?

Georgia law (Section 20-2-771) provides for two types of exemptions from vaccination requirements.

- **Medical:** A medical exemption for a vaccine should be completed on the GA DPH Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231) only when there is a physical disability or condition that contraindicates immunization for that vaccine. There must be an annual review of the medical exemption and certificates must be reissued with or without indication of the medical exemption. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-771

- **Religious Exemption:** For a child to be exempt from immunizations on religious grounds, the parent or guardian must furnish the school/facility with a notarized Affidavit of Religious Objection to Immunization (DPH Form 2208). The notarized affidavit must be kept on file in lieu of an immunization certificate and does not expire. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-771

Note: Exemptions to immunization should not be taken because of convenience. Unimmunized students are at greater risk of contracting diseases and spreading them to their families, schools, and communities. Schools should maintain an up-to-date list of students with exemptions, so that these students can be excluded from school quickly if an outbreak occurs.

29) What information will schools need to report to GDPH for the meningococcal booster dose requirement?

Schools with students in 11th grade will need to report to the GDPH the number of students that have met the meningococcal booster dose requirement by 1) being immunized; 2) receiving a medical exemption 3) declaring a religious exemption.

Schools will receive annual guidance on the immunization audit annually from the local Public Health District Clinic. School audits generally occur August – December of the current school year.

30) How can my school get ready for the MCV4 booster dose requirement?

- Get the word out now: Remind parents and guardians of all current 10th grade students to be vaccinated with the MCV4 booster dose now if they are sixteen years of age or older.
- Repeat these messages throughout the school year using school:
 - Newsletters
 - Websites
 - Email and phone message systems
 - Other school communications.
- Plan admissions procedures for the upcoming school year:
 - Information and training materials on how to document the MCV4 booster dose requirement are available at <insert website>
 - If not already using GRITS, consider becoming a user – call the GRITS Help Desk at <insert phone number>

31) Where can I go for more information about the new 11th grade requirement?

For additional information and resources for schools, check <http://dph.georgia.gov/immunization-section>, which is updated frequently.

32) What should I do if I learn that a student at my school might have meningitis?

Contact your local health department or 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) immediately for assistance.

33) I have additional questions about meningitis.

Please visit <https://dph.georgia.gov/neisseria-meningitidis> for additional information.