



August 2023

To all new students

VERY IMPORTANT HEALTH INFORMATION – IMMUNISATIONS

Based on the advice of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the Oxford College Doctors' Association, the University of Oxford's Student Welfare and Support Services **strongly recommends** that you receive the following vaccines **before** you arrive in Oxford, if you have not already had them:

- Meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY) if you are under 25 years of age
- Measles Mumps and Rubella - MMR1 and MMR 2, i.e. the normal two doses

Contact your General Practice to arrange this, if necessary. Both immunisations should be readily available outside the UK for international students.

FURTHER INFORMATION: MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

As a new student you may be at particular risk of contracting meningococcal disease and spreading it to others, as you are likely to be mixing closely with lots of new people, some of whom may unknowingly be carrying the meningococcal bacteria. Meningococcal disease can cause meningitis (inflammation of the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning) that can kill in hours, and those who recover may be left severely disabled.

Please note that meningitis is not the same condition as encephalitis, against which students from some countries might have been immunised. If you have been immunised against any form of encephalitis, you will still need the MenACWY vaccine.

Further information on [meningitis](#) and the [MenACWY vaccine](#) is available on the [NHS website](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION: MEASLES, MUMPS AND RUBELLA (MMR)

Measles and mumps are circulating in the general UK population, particularly among young people. Several outbreaks of mumps have occurred at both universities in Oxford and, year-on-year, the number of cases continues to be significant. If you are not certain that you have received the two MMR immunisations, then in line with national policy, we recommend that you obtain them before arriving at University with a month between each dose.

Further information on [measles](#), [mumps](#) and [rubella](#), and immunisation against them, is again available on the [NHS website](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION: HPV VACCINE (FOR FEMALE STUDENTS)

The [HPV vaccine](#) helps protect against genital warts and cancers (such as cervical cancer) caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV). If you are female and missed the HPV vaccine at school, you can still ask your GP for this vaccine until your 25th birthday.

OTHER HEALTH ADVICE: INFLUENZA AND COVID-19

Some students might be at an increased risk of getting serious ill from influenza and/or Covid-19. If you think you might be in a high clinical risk group, contact your GP at the start of term to see if you need to have a [flu vaccine](#) or a [first covid-19 vaccine or booster](#), and read more about the [National Flu Immunisation Programme](#) on the UK Government website.

OTHER HEALTH ADVICE: SEXUAL HEALTH

Rates of sexual health infections amongst students in Oxford were high last year, and there has been a cluster of gonorrhoea infections locally. Chlamydia is also the most common sexually transmitted infection in the UK, affecting around 1 in 14 under 25s. Many people with chlamydia have no symptoms but there can be long-term health complications if left untreated.

Further sexual health advice and information about how to access screening and treatment can be found on the [Oxfordshire Sexual Health Service website](#).

ONCE IN OXFORD

All students are advised to register with their College Doctor or any other doctor in Oxford immediately upon arrival. On registering with a doctor you will be given an NHS Number if you do not already have one, and will be asked for the details and dates of any previous immunisations. You will also have an opportunity to arrange outstanding immunisations if you still need to receive them. If you have any further queries, please contact your college or doctor.

More information about college doctors and nurses is available on the [student webpages](#).

The NHS also provide advice on [getting medical care as a student](#).

Yours faithfully



Katherine Noren

Interim Director of Student Welfare and Support Services

Important vaccinations

Meningitis

If you are under 25 and entering higher education for the first time, you should receive the MenACWY vaccine, ideally before coming to the University. If you have not already been immunised before arrival, this can be done by your college doctor.

The MenACWY vaccine is given by a single injection into the upper arm and protects against 4 strains of the meningococcal bacteria – A, C, W and Y – which cause meningitis and blood poisoning (septicaemia). You can find further information about meningitis symptoms on the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis/symptoms/>

Measles, Mumps and Rubella

Measles and mumps are circulating in the general UK population, particularly among young people. Several outbreaks of mumps have occurred at both universities in Oxford and, year-on-year, the number of cases continues to be significant. If you are not certain that you have received the two MMR immunisations, then in line with national policy, we recommend that you obtain them before arriving at University with a month between each dose.

You can find further information on the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>

Tetanus, diphtheria and polio

You should make sure your vaccinations for these are up to date. In the UK you may have received them as the 3-in-one teenage booster.

Human papillomavirus (HPV)

HPV is the name of a very common group of viruses. They do not cause any problems in most people, but some types can cause genital warts or cancer. If you are under 25 and have not received this vaccination we recommend that you do.

You can find further information about HPV and the vaccine on the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/human-papilloma-virus-hpv/>

COVID-19

All students are strongly encouraged to take up the offer of a COVID-19 vaccination when eligible, ideally before arriving in Oxford at the start of the autumn (Michaelmas) term.

All adults in the UK currently have access to a vaccine through the National Health Service. If students arrive in Oxford having had the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine elsewhere in the UK, they are encouraged to bring their vaccination card with them, or to have a record of their NHS number, and arrange to have the second (or booster) dose of the vaccine in Oxford by contacting NHS 119.

Vulnerable groups will be amongst those offered a COVID-19 booster and flu jab under plans to increase protection against respiratory viruses ahead of winter.

International students are eligible to access the COVID-19 vaccine for free, regardless of their nationality or immigration status. Further information about COVID-19 vaccinations for international students can be found on the UK Council for International Student Affairs website: [UKCISA - international student advice and guidance - Coronavirus \(Covid-19\): info for international students](#).

Other Health Advice: Monkeypox

Cases of monkeypox are rising in the UK and anyone can catch the virus, however, it's being passed on predominantly in interconnected sexual networks. It is a viral infection that spreads through skin-to-skin contact and by sharing items like bedding and towels. It's important to be aware of the symptoms and be tested regularly for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) particularly if you have multiple sexual partners. Before you have sex, go to a party or an event, check yourself for rashes and blisters. If you have these or other monkeypox symptoms, take a break from attending events, or sex, until you've called 111 or contacted a sexual health service. Visit the UK Health Security Agency website to find out more about monkeypox including symptoms and how it spreads: [Information on monkeypox and our investigation into recent cases - UK Health Security Agency \(blog.gov.uk\)](#).