



August 2025

To all new students

Very Important Health Information

Immunisations

Based on the advice of UK Health Security Agency, 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 received them:

- Meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY) if you are under 25 years of age and starting University for the first time in the UK.
- Measles Mumps and Rubella - MMR1 and MMR 2, i.e. the normal two doses
- HPV vaccine which protects against genital warts and cancers caused by the human papilloma virus, such as cervical cancer

You can contact your General Practice (GP) to arrange these vaccinations or to check if you have already been vaccinated if you are unsure. Immunisations should be readily available outside the UK for international students. It is not too late to catch up on other vaccines you may have missed, you can speak to your GP if you are unsure if you are fully vaccinated.

Meningococcal disease

Although meningococcal disease is rare, as a new student you may be at higher 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 membrane around the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning) which can be life threatening if not treated quickly. Meningitis and septicaemia can develop suddenly. Symptoms can include a blotchy rash that doesn't fade when a glass is rolled over it, fever, headache, aching muscles and joints and a stiff neck. The MenW strain can also cause vomiting and diarrhoea in teenagers and young adults. Urgent antibiotic treatment and hospitalisation are critical.

In the UK, Meningitis ACWY vaccine is offered at school to those aged 14 years old. Sometimes the records from school immunisations do not reach the GP records: if your General Practice does not have details of your meningitis vaccine, you may be able to find

out from your school nurse. If you have not been vaccinated, you can contact your General Practice to request vaccination. If you cannot be sure you have been vaccinated, it is not dangerous to repeat a dose. There are different strains of meningococcus and it is important that you are vaccinated against groups A, C, W and Y which are the main strains in young adults.

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](#).

Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)

Measles is circulating in England; there were 2,911 confirmed cases in 2024 (the highest annual number since 2012) and there have been over 500 cases so far in 2025. Measles is an infection that spreads very easily and can cause serious problems in some people. In addition, several outbreaks of mumps have occurred at both universities in Oxford in previous years.

Two doses of the MMR vaccine gives you long-term protection from both measles and mumps, as well as rubella. The MMR vaccine is usually given as two doses in early childhood. If you are not certain that you have received the two MMR immunisations, we recommend that you check this with your General Practice or your doctor and if you have not received both vaccinations obtain them before arriving at university. If you are not sure you have already had MMR vaccine it is not dangerous to have another one. There should be at least a month between each dose. If you do not have time to have both doses before arrival in Oxford, this can be arranged when you register with a doctor in Oxford.

Further information on [measles](#), [mumps](#) and [rubella](#), and the [MMR vaccination](#) is available on the [NHS website](#).

HPV Vaccine

The [HPV vaccine](#) helps protect against genital warts and cancers (such as cervical cancer and some cancers of the anus and genital areas) caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV).

If you missed the HPV vaccine at school, you can still ask your General Practitioner for this vaccine up until your 25th birthday (for women born after 1 September 1991 and men born after 1 September 2006).

Influenza and Covid-19

Some students might be at an increased risk of getting seriously ill from influenza and/or Covid-19. If you think you might be in a high clinical risk group, contact your General Practitioner 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.

Registering with a General Practitioner (GP) in Oxford

All students are strongly advised to register with their college doctor. Most practices allow on-line registration which you can apply for before coming to Oxford. [CampusDoctor](#) is an online service which you can use to register with your college doctor.

Once registered, your old GP records will usually be transferred from your previous practice if you were registered in England. If you have any significant medical history, it may be useful to bring a summary from your previous doctors.

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 dates of your immunisations. You can then contact your practice to arrange any immunisations you have not yet received.

If you have any further queries, please contact your college welfare team or college 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](#).

Sexual health and contraception

Sexual health advice can be found on the [Oxfordshire Sexual Health Service website](#).

Women can now also access a new NHS service offering free oral contraception through participating pharmacies; simply walk in and speak directly with a pharmacist to arrange a consultation about starting or continuing the contraceptive pill. This includes the supply of medication and does not require GP registration. Further information can be found [here](#).

Yours faithfully

Katherine Noren and Jane Harris
Co-Directors of Student Welfare and Support Services
University of Oxford

Rachel Mearkle
Consultant in Health Protection
UKHSA SE Health Protection Team