Medical Exemptions to Vaccination

The University of California allows for exemptions to immunization requirements based on a medical condition that is a contraindication to vaccination for the following vaccines: MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella), Varicella (chickenpox), pertussis (whooping cough), or meningitis (for certain groups of students).

- A list of established contraindications to vaccination can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for Guide to Contraindications at: http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/vac-admin/contraindications-vacc.htm

Medical exemptions must be documented on the Medical Exemption Request Form, indicating the specific vaccine for which the exemption is requested, and whether the exemption should be permanent or temporary. If temporary, the expected duration of the medical condition must be included. All forms must be signed by a licensed medical provider (MDs, DOs, NPs, PAs) and include the practice location address, telephone number, signing provider’s license number, and state or country (if outside the U.S.) where licensed medical provider practices.

Requests for medical exemptions will be reviewed by the student health staff on the campus where the student is enrolled or accepted. Requests for exemption based on conditions identified as contraindications by the vaccine manufacturers and/or the CDC will be approved. Conversely, exemption requests for conditions noted by CDC as not being true contraindications will be denied. Students with conditions not included in the approved CDC list may appeal the exemption decision by requesting a review by the UC Immunization Appeals committee.

Appeals for Denials of Medical Exemption Requests

The UC Immunization Exemption Policy Committee (IPEC) is a system-wide committee, appointed by the Office of the President, and comprised of ten representatives, including: actively practicing physicians (including at least one infectious disease specialist), students, and other faculty with expertise in a variety of fields, such as medical ethics, law, public health, religion, and international student services. Members will serve a term of no less than one year. The IAC will convene quarterly, and as needed, in order to ensure exemption requests are reviewed and decisions made within two months of the submission of a request. Students requesting an appeal must submit a written request to their campus student health center to initiate the appeal. At least three members of the committee, including a representative from the student’s home campus, and as assigned by the IAC chair, must participate in the appeal and deliver a decision.

Students whose requests for medical exemption to the immunization requirement have been denied, will be able to enroll in classes and register for the upcoming academic term (quarter, semester, or session) while their request is being reviewed. If the exemption denial is upheld, they will be expected to comply prior to the next academic term in order to allow class enrollment and registration.

In infectious disease outbreak situations, students granted medical exemptions may not be allowed to come to campus. These situations will be determined on a case-by-case basis, and in consultation with state and local public health.