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Arkansas 2026-2027 Immunization Exemption Application Packet for College or University Students

The State of Arkansas requires all students attending colleges and universities in the state be immunized against measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR). However, Act 999 of 2003 authorizes the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) to grant exemptions from this requirement.

This packet contains an application for exemption, which can also be completed online at <https://OnlineImmunizationExemption.ADH.Arkansas.gov/>. **An application must be submitted for each student requesting an exemption from this immunization requirement.** Only a 2026-2027 Immunization Exemption Application will be accepted for the 2026-2027 school year. Steps include:

- 1. Fill out an application.** Applications must include a notarized signature. Applications for students aged 17 or younger must be completed by their parents or guardians, while students age 18 or older may complete their own application.
- 2. Complete an educational activity.** The law requires that the student or their parent or guardian complete an educational activity when requesting an exemption. This can be met by reading the enclosed Vaccine Information Statement on the MMR vaccine from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Later in the application, you will be asked to sign that you have received and reviewed the Vaccine Information Statement about the MMR vaccine, that you understand its risks and benefits, and that you still choose to request an exemption.

- 3. Submit the completed application to the ADH Immunization Section.** Each part of the application must be completed, or it will be returned to the applicant. Returned applications will include a checklist showing the reason it could not be processed. Once fixed, the application may be resubmitted.
- 4. Wait for approval.** The ADH will send the applicant a letter of approval or denial within 10 working days of receiving a completed application. When approved, exemptions will be effective for the start of the fall session in 2026 and go through the summer sessions of 2027.

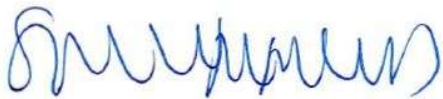
Arkansas Department of Health
4815 West Markham St. · Little Rock, AR 72205

HEALTHY.ARKANSAS.GOV

After receiving the approval letter, the student or their parent or guardian is responsible for notifying the college or university about the approved exemption. They are also responsible for keeping the original letter for their records. A copy of the approval letter should also be placed in the student's file at the college or university they attend.

Only the student or the parent or guardian who signed the application will be able to receive information related to the exemption. For more information, please call the Immunization Program at 1-800-574-4040.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Labuda', is centered on the page.

Sarah Labuda, MD, MPH, CTropMed®
Medical Director
Immunizations and Child Health Programs

If You Choose Not to Receive the MMR Vaccine, Understand the Risks and Responsibilities.

If you choose to reject the MMR vaccine, there can be risks:

- Measles, mumps, and rubella can be prevented by vaccines. These diseases still exist in the United States and other parts of the world, so they can spread here at any time.
- These diseases—and others that vaccines can prevent—cause illnesses that range from mild to life-threatening. In most cases, there is no way to know whether a person will get a mild or serious case.

When there are cases of measles, mumps, or rubella in the community:

- It may not be too late to get protection by getting vaccinated.
- The student may be asked to stay away from the college or university or from organized activities, such as sports, until the outbreak is over.
- The college or university will tell students who did not get vaccinated when it is safe to return. This could last from several days to several weeks.

Why vaccinate?

Vaccines save lives and protect against the spread of disease. Choosing not to immunize puts you/your child at risk. Vaccines were developed to protect people from dangerous and often fatal diseases. Vaccines are safe and effective, and the vaccine-preventable diseases are still a threat.

Vaccines work. They have kept people healthy and have saved millions of lives for more than 50 years. Two doses of the MMR vaccine are 97% effective in preventing measles, 86% effective in preventing mumps, and 97% effective in preventing rubella. And if a vaccinated person does get the disease, the symptoms are usually less serious than in a person who hasn't been vaccinated.

Vaccines are safe. All vaccines used in the U.S. must be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The results are reviewed again by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians before a vaccine is officially recommended to be given to children. Also, the FDA monitors where and how vaccines are made. The places where vaccines are made must be licensed. They are regularly inspected, and each vaccine lot is safety-tested.

Anyone not vaccinated can readily transmit vaccine-preventable diseases to others in their community. This includes:

- Babies who have not been vaccinated yet.
- Children and adults who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons, such as people with leukemia and other cancers, weakened immune systems, and people receiving treatment or medications that suppress their immune system.
- The small percentage of people who get vaccinated but do not reach full protection from a vaccine due to medical reasons.

You/Your child may have to be excluded from college or university. During disease outbreaks, unvaccinated students may be asked to stay away from college or university until the outbreak is over. This protects both the student and others. Outbreaks may last from several days to several weeks. Therefore, exclusion can be a hardship for the student.

Your vaccination decision affects not only your health or the health of your child, but also all of your family members, friends and their families, and your community.

For more information about vaccines, go to:

- Immunization Action Coalition at www.immunize.org and www.vaccineinformation.org.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.
- American Academy of Pediatrics at www.aap.org/immunization.
- National Network for Immunization Information at www.immunizationinfo.org
- Vaccine Education Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia at <https://www.chop.edu/vaccine-education-center/about-vec>.
- Vaccinate Your Family (VYF) at <https://www.vaccinateyourfamily.org/>.

Statement of Declination to Vaccinate

I understand that by not receiving the MMR vaccine, the student listed here is at risk for serious health problems. These include rash, fever, cough, diarrhea, muscle aches, ear infections, pneumonia, headaches, and seizures. Birth defects if acquired while pregnant include deafness, cataracts, heart defects, mental retardation, and liver and spleen damage in the baby.

Check the box below if you are 18 years or older and choose not to get the MMR vaccine, or if you are a parent of a child under 18 years old and choose not to have your child get the MMR vaccine.

MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) vaccine

I have decided to decline the required MMR vaccine as indicated above, and I have checked the box to confirm this choice. I understand that I may change my decision and choose to get vaccinated for myself or my child at any time in the future.

I understand that if I or my child is exposed to measles, mumps, or rubella, the student may need to stay away from the college or university for 21 days or longer, depending on the illness, exposure, or other factors. This step is to protect both the exempted student and others.

I understand that only the custodial parent or guardian or person who completes this application and provides a notarized signature can receive information related to this exemption.

Signature _____
Parent/Guardian or College or University Student

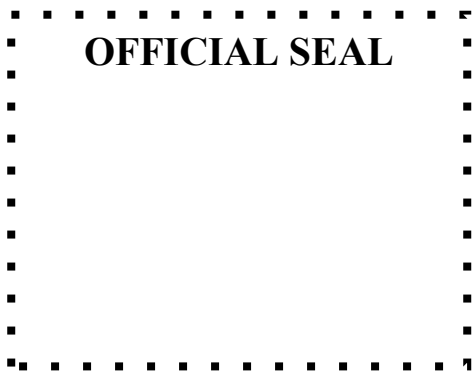
Notary Public

State of _____ County of _____

On this ___ day of _____, 20___, before me personally appeared _____
Parent/Guardian or College or University Student

known to me (or satisfactorily proven) to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged that he/she executed the same for the purposes therein contained.

In witness whereof, I hereunto set my hand and official seal.



Signature _____
Notary Public

My Commission Expires: _____

Please Return Application: CHOOSE ONE METHOD ONLY

MAIL to: Arkansas Department of Health

ATTN: Exemptions

4815 West Markham, Mail Slot #48

Little Rock, AR 72205

EMAIL to: Immunization.Section@arkansas.gov

FAX to: (501)661-2300

Educational Component

Vaccinations are strongly recommended by the Arkansas Department of Health, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Please read the attached documents.

MMR Vaccine (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella): *What You Need to Know*

Many vaccine information statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See www.immunize.org/vis

Hojas de información sobre vacunas están disponibles en español y en muchos otros idiomas. Visite www.immunize.org/vis

1. Why get vaccinated?

MMR vaccine can prevent **measles, mumps, and rubella**.

- **MEASLES (M)** causes fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes, commonly followed by a rash that covers the whole body. It can lead to seizures (often associated with fever), ear infections, diarrhea, and pneumonia. Rarely, measles can cause brain damage or death.
- **MUMPS (M)** causes fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, loss of appetite, and swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears. It can lead to deafness, swelling of the brain and/or spinal cord covering, painful swelling of the testicles or ovaries, and, very rarely, death.
- **RUBELLA (R)** causes fever, sore throat, rash, headache, and eye irritation. It can cause arthritis in up to half of teenage and adult women. If a woman gets rubella while she is pregnant, she could have a miscarriage or the baby could be born with serious birth defects.

Most people who are vaccinated with MMR will be protected for life. Vaccines and high rates of vaccination have made these diseases much less common in the United States.

2. MMR vaccine

Children need 2 doses of MMR vaccine, usually:

- First dose at age 12 through 15 months
- Second dose at age 4 through 6 years

Infants who will be traveling outside the United States when they are between 6 and 11 months of age should get a dose of MMR vaccine before travel. These children should still get 2 additional doses at the recommended ages for long-lasting protection.

Older children, adolescents, and adults also need 1 or 2 doses of MMR vaccine if they are not already

immune to measles, mumps, and rubella. Your health care provider can help you determine how many doses you need.

A third dose of MMR might be recommended for certain people in mumps outbreak situations.

MMR vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines. Children 12 months through 12 years of age might receive MMR vaccine together with varicella vaccine in a single shot, known as MMRV. Your health care provider can give you more information.

3. Talk with your health care provider

Tell your vaccination provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has had an **allergic reaction after a previous dose of MMR or MMRV vaccine**, or has any **severe, life-threatening allergies**
- Is **pregnant** or thinks she might be pregnant—pregnant women should not get MMR vaccine
- Has a **weakened immune system**, or has a **parent, brother, or sister with a history of hereditary or congenital immune system problems**
- Has ever had a **condition that makes him or her bruise or bleed easily**
- Has recently had a **blood transfusion or received other blood products**
- Has **tuberculosis**
- Has **gotten any other vaccines in the past 4 weeks**

In some cases, your health care provider may decide to postpone MMR vaccination until a future visit.



U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting MMR vaccine.

Your health care provider can give you more information.

4. Risks of a vaccine reaction

- Sore arm from the injection or redness where the shot is given, fever, and a mild rash can happen after MMR vaccination.
- Swelling of the glands in the cheeks or neck or temporary pain and stiffness in the joints (mostly in teenage or adult women) sometimes occur after MMR vaccination.
- More serious reactions happen rarely. These can include seizures (often associated with fever) or temporary low platelet count that can cause unusual bleeding or bruising.
- In people with serious immune system problems, this vaccine may cause an infection that may be life-threatening. People with serious immune system problems should not get MMR vaccine.

People sometimes faint after medical procedures, including vaccination. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

5. What if there is a serious problem?

An allergic reaction could occur after the vaccinated person leaves the clinic. If you see signs of a severe allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or weakness), call **9-1-1** and get the person to the nearest hospital.

For other signs that concern you, call your health care provider.

Adverse reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Your

health care provider will usually file this report, or you can do it yourself. Visit the VAERS website at www.vaers.hhs.gov or call **1-800-822-7967**. *VAERS is only for reporting reactions, and VAERS staff members do not give medical advice.*

6. The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) is a federal program that was created to compensate people who may have been injured by certain vaccines. Claims regarding alleged injury or death due to vaccination have a time limit for filing, which may be as short as two years. Visit the VICP website at www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation or call **1-800-338-2382** to learn about the program and about filing a claim.

7. How can I learn more?

- Ask your health care provider.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Visit the website of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for vaccine package inserts and additional information at www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - Call **1-800-232-4636** (1-800-CDC-INFO) or
 - Visit CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.

