Effective January 1, 2012, Texas law was expanded and now requires all students who are new (first time students, transfers or a returning student following a break in enrollment of at least one fall or spring semester) to show written proof of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the last five years. Students must receive the vaccination not later than the 10th day before the first day of the semester or term in which the student enrolls. Students enrolled solely in online or distance education courses, dual enrolled students who do not attend class on campus or students who are over 30 years of age are exempt. Exceptions may be found at https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm

Institutions of higher education are required to designate a department or unit to receive evidence of receipt of the vaccination. The information shall be maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Institutions are further required to provide to students, with the registration materials that the institution provides before the student’s enrollment, notice of the right to claim an exemption and notice of the importance of consulting a physician regarding the need for the immunization.

Bacterial meningitis is a serious disease that can progress extremely fast. It is an inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord and can also infect the blood. Students should contact their personal physician for the vaccination or the University’s Student Health Center (713-313-7173).