

California State University, Long Beach
Department of Nursing

Crucial Titer and Vaccination Explanation and Information – Please Read Carefully

Serum titers are blood tests that measure whether or not you are immune to a given disease(s). More specifically, a **quantitative serum titer** is a titer with a numerical value indicating your actual degree of immunity to a disease(s). The clinical sites you will be working at require documented proof of immunity in the form of quantitative titers – simply getting the vaccination is not enough. Therefore, **each student must have quantitative titers drawn**, and provide copies of the official laboratory printouts **containing the numerical values** for Mumps, Measles, Rubella, Varicella and Hep B immunity (see examples of sample lab results on the following page).

Here are some important things to be aware of/pitfalls to avoid:

1. **If you don't have a record of the previous vaccinations you've received, get your titers drawn first.**
 - Why? Measure your immunity level before getting vaccinated to boost it. Your titers might indicate a high immunity to a specific disease, in which case you won't need to get vaccinated for that disease.

2. **Please get the exact type of titers we have asked you to.**
 - 3 Common Mistakes Students Make:
 - Quantitative vs. Qualitative titers – quantitative have a numerical value, qualitative simply indicates “immune vs. non-immune” (with no numerical value). **Be sure to get quantitative titers.**

 - IgG vs. IgM titers – **you need IgG titers; DO NOT** get labs for IgM titers.

 - Hbs AB IgG vs. HbsAG IgG titers (for Hep B) – **you need Hep B AB (antibody) titers, NOT** Hep B AG (antigen) titers.

3. **If the titer for a specific disease shows that you're not immune, you need to get vaccinated or re-vaccinated (also known as getting a booster).**
 - Note: This is where previous vaccination records are helpful. Vaccinations for different diseases have different timelines and numbers of shots needed (ex. Varicella – 2 shot series 4-6 weeks apart vs. Hep B – 3 shot series over 6 months). If a specific titer indicates non-immunity, then your physician (or the Nursing Department) can direct you on next steps for vaccination.

4. **Once vaccinated, titers should not be drawn until 6-8 weeks after the vaccination.**
 - Why? If drawn too soon afterwards, the titers will indicate non-immunity as the vaccine will still be in your system. Don't make the mistake of getting a titer drawn prematurely in order to meet the Nursing Department deadline, that doesn't work in your favor.