

Titer and Vaccination Explanations – Please read carefully

(Adapted from the CSULB School of Nursing website)

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 where 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 keep copies of the official laboratory printouts **containing the numerical values** for Mumps, Measles, Rubella, Varicella and Hep B immunity. The numerical values should also be indicated on your completed Nursing Student Health Requirements Form that will be completed by your Primary Care Provider.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO BE AWARE OF/PITFALLS TO AVOID:

1. If you do not have a record of the previous vaccinations you have received, get your titers drawn first.
 - Why? Your titers might indicate a high immunity to a specific disease, in which case you will not need to get vaccinated for that disease.
2. Please get the exact type of titers we have asked you to complete.
 - 3 Common Mistakes Students Make:
 - Quantitative vs. Qualitative titers – quantitative titers have a numerical value, qualitative simply indicates “immune vs. non-immune” (with no numerical value). **Be sure to get quantitative titers. If you do not get quantitative titers, we will ask you to get them redone.**
 - 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 are 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 (example – 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 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. Do not make the mistake of getting a titer drawn prematurely in order to meet the nursing department deadline; that does not work in your favor.

WHAT TO DO IF ANY OF YOUR QUANTITATIVE TITERS COME BACK NOT-IMMUNE:

1. Consult your physician about your vaccination history – how many immunizations have you already received for the disease(s)?
2. If you have not already had it, start the vaccination series for the non-immune disease. If you are part way through the vaccination series, complete it.
3. If you have completed the series, you will need to get an additional immunization (also known as a booster) for that disease.
4. After completing the series, or getting the booster, wait 6 weeks and then get a follow-up titer. **DO NOT GET THE TITER TOO EARLY OR IT WILL COME BACK NON-IMMUNE.**

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR FOLLOW-UP TITER STILL COMES BACK NON-IMMUNE:

- If you have received all of the immunizations possible (by completing the series and getting boosters), you may not convert to immunity. At this point, it is okay. The SMC Nursing program will need you to retain all documentation indicating your non-immunity to the disease(s), in the form of your follow-up titer(s).