

# New International Students

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Welcome to Mason. We are happy you are here! Getting medical care in the United States may be different than getting medical care at home. Here is some information to help you better understand health care at Student Health Services and in the United States.

## Immunization Requirements

The **Immunization Record Form** must be filled out and given to the Student Health Services Immunization Office by the correct deadline (“due date”). Student Health recommends turning your form in early.

All immunizations (also called vaccinations) must be documented by a doctor. All records must be in English. If you do not have a required immunization, but think you have gotten the vaccine, you may get a blood test (also called a ‘titer’) to see if you will need to be immunized. You can get the vaccinations at Mason’s Student Health clinics. If you get the vaccinations in your home country or at another health care facility in the United States you must provide documentation from the doctor or health care provider.

You will pay a late fee if your immunization records are incomplete by stated deadlines. A hold will also be placed on your Patriot Web account. The hold will prevent you from registering for classes the next semester.

Please contact the Immunization Office you have questions ([immunize@gmu.edu](mailto:immunize@gmu.edu), 703-993-2135).

## Tuberculosis (TB) Screening and Testing Requirements

Read the list of countries on page 2 of the Immunization Record Form. If you are from a country with a high Tuberculosis (TB) risk, or have lived in one of those countries for more than 3 months in the last 5 years before arriving in the United States, you must complete TB testing requirements as listed on the immunization record form.

## Start at Student Health Services

Student Health Services clinics provide medical care to Mason students. There are clinics on the Fairfax, Arlington, and Science and Technology campuses. Each clinic has different hours that they are open.

Doctors, nurse practitioners, and nurses provide health care services. There is no cost to be seen by a health care provider at Student Health. Immunizations, lab tests, supplies, physical exams, and some do have a cost (fee). Your health care provider will tell you the cost of a service during your visit. Your medical care is confidential.

## How Student Health Services can help you

Student Health can help you if you feel sick or have an injury. You can also talk to a health care provider about any health concern or question.

Some services we provide include physical examinations, women’s health exams, vaccinations, testing for sexually transmitted diseases (STD’s), pregnancy testing, and other lab tests.

Students can get health and wellness counseling, education on eating better, and help if you want to stop smoking cigarettes or using tobacco.

Our healthcare providers can write prescriptions for medicine for illness, birth control (contraceptives), or other needs. Students can take the prescription to an off-campus pharmacy where you would buy the medicine.

## **Emergency Medical Care – Call 911**

Is it... Life threatening? Hard to breathe? Severe chest pain? A major injury?

Do you... Need help right now?

### **Call 911**

## **How to get care at Student Health**

Call Student Health Services (703-993-2831).

Based on your health care need, Student Health staff will schedule you an appointment. You will come to the clinic (our office) at your appointment time to meet with one of our healthcare providers.

When you come to the Student Health clinic, tell the staff member sitting at the front desk you are here for your appointment. You will then complete a “self-check-in” form. Please arrive 20 minutes before your appointment time to fill out this form. Bring your Mason ID and your health insurance card.

Call to make an appointment for any routine or non-urgent health need. You can schedule routine appointments around classes and other activities, which can be convenient and save you time.

You can walk-in to one of the Student Health clinics if you have an acute or sudden illness, symptoms, or an injury. Tell the front desk staff why you are here. You may need to speak with a nurse. You may have to wait before being seen. Patients who walk-in for care are seen based on how serious their symptoms are. Your wait time also depends on the number of other patients who need to be seen.

If you are not able to come to your appointment, contact Student Health by phone or email to tell us. You will have to pay a no-show fee if you do not tell us or cancel at least 4 hours before your appointment time.

### **If Student Health is Closed**

If Student Health is closed and you have a medical question, call 703-993-2831. Press “0” (zero) to speak with a nurse. The nurse will give you advice about what to do.

## **Cost of care at Student Health**

There is no charge to be seen by one of our healthcare providers. There are fees for immunizations, lab tests, medications, procedures, treatments, supplies, and some office visits. Your health care provider will tell you the cost of a service during your visit.

If you have the student health insurance plan offered by Mason, many services are provided at Student Health at no cost to you. These services are listed in the health insurance brochure.

## Chronic (Long-term) Health Condition

Do you regularly go to a doctor or medical provider at home? Do you have a long-term (chronic) medical condition? Do you take a medication that a doctor must give you?

If yes, please call to schedule an appointment to meet with one of our Student Health doctors or nurse practitioners. There is no cost for this appointment. We can talk with you about our services. And we will talk with you about how to stay healthy while you are at Mason.

Please bring your medical records from your doctor with you. Try to get your records translated into English. If you are taking medicine(s), please write down the name of the medicine(s) and bring that to your appointment.

## Specialist Doctor Care

Student Health doctors and nurse practitioners provide general medical care. A student may need to see a specialist doctor about a specific medical concern or to diagnose (find out the cause of) a problem. Specialist doctors are experts about a specific area of the body.

If Student Health feels a student needs to see a specialist, we can help the student find a doctor. This doctor will have an office off-campus.

## Health Care in the United States

When you are sick, injured, or need to speak with a doctor, you call the doctor's office to schedule an appointment to be seen. Appointments are made during normal hours of operation (usually Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm).

Some offices will let you walk-in to get medical care. These offices are usually called "Urgent Care Clinics" or "Walk-In Medical Clinics". These offices provide general medical care. They are often open in the evenings (after 5pm) and on Saturday or Sunday. You may have to wait before being seen. Patients who walk-in for care are seen based on the severity of their symptoms and the number of other patients who need care.

An emergency room or hospital is always open. An emergency room should be used only for emergency care; you can walk-in to get medical care. If you call 911 because you have a medical emergency, an ambulance will usually drive you to the closest emergency room.

In the United States, many people use health insurance to help pay for medical care. Take your insurance card to the health care facility and the facility will submit the cost (bill) to your health insurance. You are responsible for the cost of your visit to a health care facility that is not paid by your insurance.

**Tip:** Memorize your phone number and physical address. Save it in your phone. You will need to give this information if you seek medical care.

## If you are under age 18

In the United States, if you are under the age of 18, you are considered a "minor". For most medical procedures, your parent or legal guardian will need to give consent (written or verbal permission) for medical treatment.

If you are under the age of 18, Student Health recommends you have the Minor Consent Form signed by your parent or guardian before arriving on campus. This is on the Immunization Record Form. Include your parent's name, phone number - including country code, and email address.

If you need health care at another medical facility or office, your parent or guardian will have to give consent to that office.

## Health Insurance

George Mason University requires J-1 and F-1 visa status students to have health insurance coverage under [University Policy #6002](#). The Insurance Office will automatically enroll F-1 and J-1 visa students into the school selected health insurance plan. J-1 and F-1 visa students pay for the health insurance through their Patriot Web account. J-1 and F-1 visa students may apply for a waiver from the student health insurance plan if their current health insurance plan meets waiver requirements.

**Tip:** Carry your health insurance card with you. Save a photo of the **front and back** of the card on your phone.

Understanding health insurance can be difficult (even for people who have lived in the United States). It is important to learn about health insurance because it is how you pay for your medical care.

Review common insurance terms. Read your insurance summary of benefits and coverage.

Ask questions. Our Insurance Office staff members can answer questions about the university student health insurance plan. Contact the customer service of your health insurance company to ask questions.

Do you have a dependent? A dependent is your child or spouse. If you have the university student health insurance you can purchase health insurance for your dependent during an open enrollment period.