



Texas Medical Freedom Guide for Parents & Citizens Your Rights in Texas: What You Need to Know

As a Texas parent or citizen, you have choices when it comes to vaccinations for yourself and your children. This guide explains your rights, the exemption process, and helpful additional resources.

I. Vaccination Exemption Types: An Overview¹

- Medical Exemption: When a licensed physician determines a vaccine may be medically harmful.
- Conscientious/Religious Exemption: When vaccination conflicts with your moral, personal, or religious beliefs.
- Full Vaccination: When one follows the state-required immunization schedule.

II. Medical Exemptions in Texas²

A. When to Use This Option

- You may request a medical exemption if a licensed physician determines that a vaccine may pose a medical risk to your child or to someone living in your household.

B. Requirements

- A medical exemption must:
 - Be written and signed by a U.S.-licensed MD or DO.
 - State the specific vaccine(s) that may be medically harmful.
 - Explain the medical basis for the exemption.

¹National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). (2025). [State Non-Medical Exemptions From School Immunization Requirements](#).

²Texas Health and Human Services. [Texas Immunization Exemptions](#).; see also [Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\) §97.62](#).

- Be renewed annually unless the physician indicates that the condition is permanent.
- Schools and child-care facilities are required to accept a valid medical exemption.

III. Conscientious/Religious Exemptions in Texas³

A. When to Use This Option

- You may request a conscientious exemption if vaccination conflicts with your personal, moral, or religious beliefs.

B. Changes to the Law

- [HB 1586](#) (Effective September 2025): Texas now allows parents to download the official exemption form directly from the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), eliminating the previous requirement to request forms by mail and wait for processing and delivery.

C. Step-by-Step Process

1. Download the [form](#) from the Texas DSHS immunization exemption website.
2. Complete the form with your child's information and the vaccines you are declining.
3. Have the form notarized by a Texas notary public (in-person or remote).
4. Submit the form to your child's school or child-care provider within 90 days of notarization.
5. Renew every two years. The exemption expires two years from the notary date.

Important Note: During an official disease outbreak or public health emergencies declared by Texas health officials, unvaccinated students, including those with exemptions, may be temporarily excluded from school.

³Texas Health and Human Services. [Texas Immunization Exemptions](#).

IV. School Immunization Requirements by Grade Level⁴

Texas requires students to provide proof of immunization or a valid exemption. Key vaccine requirements include:

- Pre-K & Elementary
 - DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
 - Polio
 - MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
 - Hepatitis B
 - Varicella (or documented history of chickenpox)
 - Haemophilus Influenzae Type B (Hib) for ages under 5
- 7th Grade
 - Tdap booster
 - Meningococcal (MenACWY)
- College Students Under Age 22
 - Meningococcal vaccine within the past 5 years and at least 10 days before the semester begins.
 - Exemptions accepted.

V. Constitutional, Federal, and Employment Protections

A. Constitutional Protections

- The [First Amendment](#) guarantees your right to religious exercise. Courts have consistently held that government policies cannot favor secular motivations over religious ones.

B. Federal Civil Rights & Employment Protections

- Under [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act](#), employers must consider requests for religious accommodation related to vaccination.
- An employer must grant an accommodation unless doing so would create an undue hardship on the business.
- The [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#) enforces these protections.

⁴Texas Health and Human Services. (2025). [Requirements: Requirements by Grade-Level](#).

C. Key Legal Principles⁵

- Your belief must be sincerely held and religious in nature.
- You may need to explain how your beliefs conflict with a vaccination requirement.
- Employers must evaluate each request individually; blanket or automatic denials are not permitted.
- An employer may deny a request only if it can demonstrate undue hardship.

VI. **Tips for Parents & Citizens**

A. Documentation

- Keep copies (digital and printed) of all exemption forms.
- Photograph or scan forms before submitting them.
- Ask the school for a dated receipt.

B. Working With Schools

- Present your documentation clearly and respectfully.
- Understand that some staff may be unfamiliar with exemption rules; you may need to reference Texas DSHS guidance.
- If necessary, request to speak with an administrator.

C. Notarization Options

- Banks
- Credit unions
- UPS/FedEx stores
- Libraries
- Some remote online notaries

D. Reporting Issues

- If you experience any adverse effects from vaccines, report to [VAERS \(Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System\)](#). Document any pressure, coercion, or discrimination related to vaccine status.

⁵This document should not be construed as legal advice or guidance; consult a qualified attorney for advice specific to your situation.

VII. Frequently Asked Questions⁶

1. Can I pick and choose which vaccines to exempt?

Yes. You may exempt your child from specific vaccines while receiving others. You are not required to take an “all or nothing” approach.

2. Do I need to belong to a specific religion to claim a religious exemption?

No. Texas allows exemptions for “conscience, including religious belief.” You do not need to be affiliated with an organized religion to qualify.

3. How long does the exemption process take?

Beginning in September 2025, you may download and complete the exemption form immediately from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

The timeline now depends on how quickly you fill out, notarize, and return the form.

4. Where do I mail my exemption form?

If you are requesting a form by mail or submitting documentation by mail or fax, use the following contact:

DSHS Immunization Branch

Mail Code 1946
P.O. Box 149347
Austin, TX 78714-9347
Fax: (512) 776-7544

5. Can schools reject my exemption?

Schools and child-care facilities must accept valid, properly completed exemption forms. If you encounter difficulties, contact Texas DSHS or seek legal assistance for support.

⁶This document is for general education only and not legal or medical advice. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider for medical decisions and a licensed attorney for legal questions. Verify all laws and agency policies before acting.

6. What happens if we move to another school in Texas?

Your exemption transfers with your child's school records. You do not need to repeat the exemption process.

7. Can my child be provisionally enrolled?

Yes. Children may be provisionally enrolled for up to 30 days while exemption documentation is being submitted or processed.

VIII. Helpful Resources & Websites⁷

- **Official Texas Resources**

- [Texas DSHS Immunization Exemptions](#)
- [Texas DSHS Immunization School Requirements](#)
- Download Exemption Forms (coming September 2025):
dshs.texas.gov (check immunization exemption page)
- ImmTrac2 (Immunization Records):
Contact: ImmTrac2@dshs.texas.gov

- **Advocacy Organizations**

- [Texans for Vaccine Choice](#)
- [Texans for Medical Freedom](#)

- **Legal & Educational Resources**

- [National Vaccine Information Center](#)
- [Children's Health Defense](#)
- [Network for Public Health Law](#)
- [The Healthy American](#)
- [America's Frontline Doctors](#)

- **Federal Government Resources**

- [CDC Vaccine Information](#)
- [VAERS](#)

⁷The inclusion of outside resources should not imply endorsement and instead are exclusively provided for informational purposes.