

# STATE OF COLORADO

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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

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Dear Parents of Students in Colorado Schools, K through 12<sup>th</sup> Grades (School Year 2011-12)

Immunizations are an important part of our children's health care and Colorado law requires that children going to school be vaccinated to prevent vaccine preventable disease. The purpose of the first part of this letter is to let you know which vaccines your student will be **required** to have in order to attend a Colorado school in the 2011-12 school year. The second part of the letter includes recommended vaccines.

## Required Vaccines

- **Hepatitis B (Hep B)** – Three doses are required for all students K through 12<sup>th</sup> grades to protect against a serious liver disease that can lead to liver damage, liver cancer, and death.
- **Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (DTaP/Tdap/DT/Td)** – Five doses of DTaP or DT are required for children under 7 years of age and one dose of Tdap is required for students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Td is required for children 7 to 10 years of age who have not completed the DTaP or DT series. DTaP, DT, Td & Tdap are the vaccines that protect against tetanus (a disease that causes painful muscle stiffness, convulsions and death) and diphtheria (a disease that can cause suffocation, paralysis, heart failure, and death). The pertussis portion of the vaccine protects against whooping cough, which can lead to pneumonia, seizures, and death. Tdap vaccine will help protect adolescents from the whooping cough or pertussis disease and it will help prevent them from infecting infants and smaller children in the family.
- **Polio (IPV)** – Up to 4 doses of the vaccine are required and protects against paralysis, typically of the legs, as well as the muscles that help us breathe.
- **Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)** – Two doses of this vaccine are required to protect against three diseases. Measles can cause ear infection, pneumonia, seizures, inflammation of the brain, and death. Mumps can lead to deafness, meningitis, painful swelling of the testicles or ovaries, and occasionally, death. Rubella in pregnant women can cause miscarriage or serious birth defects to the unborn child.
- **Varicella or Chickenpox (Var)** – Two doses are required for children in kindergarten through 4th grade. One dose is required for children in 5<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grade. This vaccine protects against chickenpox disease, a rash illness that can lead to skin infections, pneumonia, swelling of the brain, and on occasion, death.

(To read about each disease, please visit the following website: <http://www.ImmunizeForGood.com/vaccines>)

**Recommended Vaccines  
for the best protection against vaccine preventable diseases**

As a parent, it is important to know that in addition to the vaccines **required** by the state of Colorado Board of Health for school entry, there are vaccines that are **recommended** by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). This is the immunization schedule that will best protect your child from even more vaccine preventable diseases.

- **Influenza (Flu)** – Recommended for children 6 months to 18 years of age to prevent respiratory illness caused by the flu that can cause illness and sometimes death.
- **Meningococcal Meningitis (MCV)** - Adolescents 11 -18 years of age should receive one dose of the vaccine, which helps prevent meningitis that can cause hearing loss, damage to the nervous system, loss of arms or legs, and possibly death.
- **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)** - Three doses of this vaccine are recommended for females 11-12 years of age and this vaccine prevents HPV-type related cervical cancer.
- **Hepatitis A (Hep A)** – Two doses of this vaccine prevent the disease that can affect the liver causing fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, stomach pain, vomiting, and in rare cases, death.

(To read about each disease, please visit the following website: <http://www.ImmunizeForGood.com/vaccines>)

Included with this letter is the document entitled: “*Minimum Number of Immunization Doses Required- Kindergarten through Grade 12, 2011-12.*” The chart in this document should help you figure out which **required** vaccines your child will need for school as well as the number of doses needed for protection. Exemption information is also included at the end of this document.

Parents often have concerns or want more information on children’s immunization and vaccine safety. An informative website developed specifically for parents can be located at: [www.ImmunizeForGood.com](http://www.ImmunizeForGood.com). The Colorado Immunization Section’s website is located at: [www.ColoradoImmunizations.com](http://www.ColoradoImmunizations.com).

Schools work hard to ensure compliance with the immunization laws and your help in providing updated immunization records at school registration is greatly appreciated. *Please discuss your child’s vaccination needs with your child’s doctor or local public health agency. (To find your local public health department’s contact information call the Family Health Line at 1-303-692-2229 or 1-800-688-7777). Please bring your child’s updated immunization records to the school each time your child receives an immunization.*

Sincerely,

The Colorado Immunization Program  
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
303-692-2650

MINIMUM NUMBER OF DOSES REQUIRED FOR CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATION  
Kindergarten through Grade 12, 2011-12

VACCINE	Number of Doses	Grades K-12 (5-18 Years of Age)
		<i>Vaccines administered ≤4 days before the minimum age are valid</i>
<b>Pertussis</b>	5 to 6	5 <b>DTaP</b> or if dose 4 was administered on or after the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday, the requirement is met. The final dose must be administered no sooner than 4 years of age. (DTaP is only licensed for children under 7 years of age). 1 <b>Tdap</b> is required for students entering 6 <sup>th</sup> through 12 <sup>th</sup> grades.
<b>Tetanus/Diphtheria</b>	3 to 5	5 <b>DT</b> or if dose 4 was administered on or after the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday, the requirement is met. A student 7 through 9 years of age who has had only a 2 doses of DTaP or DT (before the age of 7 years) can meet the tetanus/diphtheria requirement by receiving a dose of Td if it is given 6 months after the 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose. ( <b>Tdap</b> should be given to students at 10 or 11 years of age to complete the tetanus/diphtheria requirement if possible).
<b>Polio</b>	4	4 <b>IPV</b> or if dose 3 was administered on or after the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday, only 3 doses are required. The final dose must be given no sooner than the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday. <i>A laboratory test showing immunity is acceptable.</i>
<b>Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)</b>	2	For school certification, the 1st dose cannot be administered more than 4 days before the 1 <sup>st</sup> birthday. The minimum interval between dose 1 and dose 2 is at least 28 days. <i>A laboratory test showing immunity is acceptable.</i>
<b>Varicella (Chickenpox)</b> <i>Documentation of disease from a health care provider (physician, RN or PA) is required.</i>	1 or 2	For school certification, the vaccine cannot be administered more than 4 days before the 1 <sup>st</sup> birthday. 2 doses are required for children entering K, through 4th grade. 1 dose is required for 5th through 11 <sup>th</sup> grade. <i>A laboratory test showing immunity is acceptable.</i>
<b>Hepatitis B</b> <i>Students who have not received 3 doses of Hep B vaccine prior to 7/1/09, must follow the minimum intervals recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)</i>	3	<b>ACIP minimum intervals:</b> The second dose must be administered at least 4 weeks after the first dose. The third dose must be administered at least 16 weeks after the first dose and at least 8 weeks after the second dose. The final dose is to be administered no sooner than 24 weeks or 6 months of age. The 2-dose series is acceptable for ages 11-15. 2 doses can only be accepted using the approved vaccine for the 2-dose series with proper documentation (name of the vaccine, dosage, dates, and interval). <i>A laboratory test showing immunity is acceptable.</i>

**You must provide one of the following to your child's school in order to comply with the law:**

1. A completed Certificate of Immunization certifying that the student has received minimum immunizations as indicated above.
2. If a student's Certificate of Immunization is not up to date, the parent/guardian or emancipated student has 14 days after direct notification to provide documentation that the next required immunization was administered and submit a written plan for completion of any additional required immunizations. If the plan is not completed, the student shall be expelled or suspended from school for non-compliance. Exception to this rule is a shortage of vaccine.
3. Statement of Exemption to Immunization Law printed on the reverse side of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Certificate of Immunization:
  - a) a **medical** exemption signed by licensed physician stating that the student's physical condition is such that immunizations would endanger life or health or is otherwise medically contraindicated; or
  - b) a **religious** exemption signed by the parent, guardian, or emancipated student that the student adheres to a religious belief opposed to immunizations; or
  - c) a **personal** exemption signed by the parent, guardian, or emancipated student that the student adheres to a personal belief opposed to immunizations.

**Immunization requirements will be strictly enforced for all students.** Students who do not meet the requirements will be denied attendance according to Colorado Revised Statutes 25-4-902.



**To learn where to obtain immunizations free or at low cost call the Family Health Line at 303-692-2229 or 1-800-688-7777.**