



Dear parents/guardians of students attending Colorado kindergarten - 12th grade schools for the 2023-24 school year:

We know you're thinking of all the things you need to do to make sure your student is ready for school. Getting vaccinated is an important part of their school readiness and keeps children from catching and spreading diseases that can make them sick and potentially disrupt in-person learning.

Required and recommended vaccines:

- Colorado law requires students who attend a public, private, or parochial Kindergarten - 12th grade school to be vaccinated against many of the diseases vaccines can prevent unless a *Certificate of Exemption* is filed. For more information, visit cdphe.colorado.gov/schoolrequiredvaccines. Your student must be vaccinated against:
 - Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP, Tdap).
 - Hepatitis B (HepB).
 - Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR).
 - Polio (IPV).
 - Varicella (chickenpox).
- Colorado follows recommendations set by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. **Prior to starting Kindergarten**, students must receive their final doses of DTaP, IPV, MMR, and varicella. **Prior to starting sixth grade**, students must receive one dose of Tdap vaccine, even if the student is younger than 11 years. You can view recommended vaccine schedules at: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/child-easyread.html (birth through 6 years) or www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/adolescent-easyread.html (7 to 18 years).
- CDC also recommends vaccines for COVID-19, hepatitis A (HepA), human papillomavirus (HPV), influenza (flu), and meningococcal disease (MenACWY and MenB), but these are not required for school entry in Colorado.

Exclusion from school

- Your student may be excluded from school if your school does not have an up-to-date *Certificate of Immunization*, *Certificate of Exemption*, or an in-process plan on file for your student.
- If someone gets sick with a vaccine-preventable disease or there is an outbreak at your student's school and your student has not received the vaccine for that disease, they may be excluded from school activities. That could mean lost learning time for them and lost work and wages for you. For example, if your student has not received a MMR vaccine, they may be excluded from school for 21 days after someone gets sick with measles.

Have questions?

Talk with a health care provider or your local public health agency (LPHA) about which vaccines your student needs or if you have questions. You can find a vaccine provider at cdphe.colorado.gov/immunizations/get-vaccinated. You can read about the safety and importance of vaccines at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/FAQs.html, childvaccineco.org, ImmunizeForGood.com, and cdphe.colorado.gov/immunization-education. Staying up to date on routine immunizations is important for adults, as well as children. We encourage parents and guardians to find out what vaccines might be due. It's never too late for families to get back on track! Learn more about vaccines for adults at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/index.html.

Paying for vaccinations

If you need help finding free or low-cost vaccines and providers who give them, go to COVax4Kids.org, contact your local public health agency (find LPHA contact information at cdphe.colorado.gov/find-your-local-public-health-agency), or call the Mile High Family Health Line at 303-692-2229 or 1-800-688-7777 to ask about Medicaid contact information and health clinics located in your area.

Vaccination records

- Share your student's updated *Certificate of Immunization* with their school every time they receive a vaccine.
- Need to find your student's vaccine record? It may be available from the [Colorado Immunization Information System \(CIIS\)](https://Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS)). Visit COVaxRecords.org for more information, including directions for how to use the CIIS Public

Portal to view and print your student’s vaccine record.

Exemptions

- If your student cannot get vaccines because of [medical reasons](#), you must submit a *Certificate of Medical Exemption* to your school, signed by a physician (MD, DO), advanced practice nurse (APN), or delegated physician assistant (PA). You only need to submit this certificate once, unless your student’s school or information changes. You can get the form at cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions.
- If you choose not to have your student vaccinated according to Colorado’s school vaccine requirements for reasons that are nonmedical, you must submit a *Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption* to your school. Nonmedical exemptions must be submitted annually at every new school year (July 1 through June 30). There are two ways to file a nonmedical exemption.
 1. File the *Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption* WITH the signature from an immunizing provider in Colorado who is a physician (MD, DO), advanced practice nurse (APN), delegated physician’s assistant (PA), registered nurse (RN), or pharmacist licensed in Colorado; OR
 2. File the *Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption*, which you will be able to access upon completion of the state’s online immunization education module.
- Downloadable certificates and a link to the online education module are available at cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions.

How’s your school doing on vaccinations?

Some parents/ guardians/caregivers, especially those with students who have weakened immune systems, may want to know which schools have the highest immunization rates. Annually, schools must report immunization and exemption numbers (but not student names or birth dates) to the state health department. Schools do not control their specific immunization and exemption rates or establish the Vaccinated Children Standard described in [§25-4-911, CRS](#). Schools must include their MMR immunization and exemption rates from the most recently completed school year in this letter. Schools may choose to also include immunization and exemption rates for other school-required vaccines. Additional immunization and exemption rates can be found at COVaxRates.org.

School name	2021-2022 MMR immunization rate REQUIRED IN LETTER	2021-2022 MMR exemption rate REQUIRED IN LETTER
<i>Schools may also include the rates for the school-required vaccines shown below in this annual letter to parents/guardians</i>		
Vaccinated Children Standard 95% immunization rate for all school-required vaccines	2021-2022 DTaP/Tdap immunization rate	2021-2022 DTaP/Tdap exemption rate
	2021-2022 HepB immunization rate	2021-2022 HepB exemption rate
	2021-2022 IPV immunization rate	2021-2022 IPV exemption rate
	2021-2022 Varicella immunization rate	2021-2022 Varicella exemption rate

November 9, 2022

To: Parents/guardians of students enrolled in Colorado schools
From: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Immunization Branch
Re: Tdap vaccine required for sixth-grade entry

Dear Parent/Guardian, *(health care providers, please see reverse side).*

Colorado law [requires](#) students who are entering sixth grade to receive a tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap) vaccine before their first day of school.

The Tdap vaccine can prevent tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Tetanus enters the body through cuts or wounds and cannot be spread from person to person. Diphtheria and pertussis spread from person to person.

- **Tetanus** causes painful stiffening of the muscles. Tetanus can lead to serious health problems, including the inability to open your mouth, difficulty swallowing and breathing, and death.
- **Diphtheria** can lead to difficulty breathing, heart failure, paralysis, and death.
- **Pertussis**, also known as “whooping cough,” can cause uncontrollable, violent coughing that makes it hard to breathe, eat, or drink. Pertussis can be extremely serious, especially in infants and young children, and can cause pneumonia, convulsions, brain damage, or death. In teens and adults, it can cause weight loss, loss of bladder control, passing out, and rib fractures from severe coughing.

While the Tdap vaccine is typically given at age 11 for students who are entering sixth grade, it may also be given as early as 10 years of age. When it is given at age 10, it will: 1) Count as a valid adolescent Tdap dose, and 2) meet Colorado’s sixth grade Tdap school vaccine requirement.

Is your sixth-grader missing their Tdap vaccine? Click [here](#) to find an immunization provider near you.

If your child does not receive Tdap vaccine at sixth-grade entry, regardless of their age, a certificate of [medical](#) or [nonmedical](#) exemption must be submitted to the school. This will ensure your student is compliant with Colorado school immunization law and able to attend school.

For clinical questions about vaccines or more information, email cdphe_vacs@cdphe.co.us.

November 9, 2022

To: Health care providers

From: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Immunization Branch

Re: Tdap vaccine required for sixth-grade entry

Dear health care provider, (parents and guardians, please see reverse side).

Colorado law [requires](#) students who are 10 or 11 years of age and entering sixth grade to receive a Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine before the start of the school year.

The [Colorado Board of Health Rule](#) aligns with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) [immunization schedule](#). While Tdap vaccine is typically given at age 11 for students entering sixth grade, it may also be given at 10 years of age. This is [allowed by CDC](#). A Tdap dose given at age 10 will count as a valid adolescent Tdap dose and meet Colorado's sixth grade Tdap school vaccine requirement.

Per Colorado law, prior to school entry, the student's parent/guardian is responsible for submitting a student's school-required vaccine records. If these are not submitted to the school, the student's parent/guardian is responsible for submitting a Certificate of [Medical](#) or [Nonmedical](#) Exemption in order for their student to attend school. Refer to this [CDC web page](#) for definitions of medical contraindications to vaccines.

Immunizations are the best protection against vaccine-preventable diseases. Access the following resources to support children and adolescents in staying current or catching up with their routine vaccines, including Tdap and DTaP.

Routinely timed vaccines:

- [Child and adolescent immunization schedule](#) (CDC)

Catch up guidance:

- [Children and adolescents 10 through 18 years of age](#) (PDF)
- [Children and adolescents who start late or are >1 month behind](#) (CDC)

The Colorado Immunization Branch provides access to a nurse consultant who can address vaccine-related questions. Please call CDPHE at 303-692-2700, Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., and ask for the School and Child Care Nurse Consultant who can address your school-required vaccines questions or email cdphe_vacs@state.co.us.