



Advancing Colorado's health and protecting the places we live, learn, work and play

Dear parents/guardians of students attending Colorado kindergarten - 12th grade schools for the 2024-25 school year:

We know there's nothing more important than making sure your children stay healthy and learning all year long. Getting vaccinated is an important part of keeping kids in school, as it prevents them from catching and spreading diseases that can make them sick. This letter includes important information about Colorado's school vaccine requirements, as well as other resources.

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.

To attend school, your child 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 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#). This committee is a group of medical and public health experts who study vaccines and recommend them for the public. **Before starting kindergarten**, students must receive their final doses of DTaP, IPV, MMR, and varicella. **Before starting sixth grade**, students must receive one dose of Tdap vaccine, even if the student is age 10. 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) for the K-12 population, but these are not required for school entry in Colorado.

This recommended schedule is safe and effective. It's based on how your child's immune system responds to vaccines at various ages, and how likely your child is to be exposed to a particular disease.

Exclusion from school

Your child may be excluded if their school does not have an up-to-date Certificate of Immunization, Certificate of Exemption, or an in-process plan on file for your child.

If someone is sick or there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease at your child's school, and your child 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 child has not received a MMR vaccine, they may need to stay home 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 to ask questions and find out which vaccines your child needs. Find a vaccine provider at cdphe.colorado.gov/get-vaccinated. Read about the safety and importance of vaccines at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/FAQs.html, childvaccineco.org, [ImmunizeForGood.com](https://immunizeforgood.com), and cdphe.colorado.gov/immunization-education.

Staying up to date on routine immunizations is important for adults as well as children. It's never too late for families to get back on track! Learn more at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/index.html.

Paying for vaccinations

If you need help finding free or low-cost vaccines, go to COVax4Kids.org, contact your local public health agency (cdphe.colorado.gov/find-your-local-public-health-agency), or dial 2-1-1 for information on Health First Colorado (Medicaid) and vaccine clinics in your area.

Vaccination records

Share your child'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://coloradoimmunization.org/). Visit COVaxRecords.org for more information, including directions on how to view and print your student's vaccine record.

Exemptions

If your student cannot get vaccines for [medical reasons](#), you must submit a Certificate of Medical Exemption to your school, signed by an advanced practice nurse (APN), physician (MD, DO), or physician assistant (PA) licensed to practice in any state or territory in the United States. You only need to submit this certificate once, unless your student's school or information changes. 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 nonmedical reasons, you must submit a Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption to your school. Nonmedical exemptions must be submitted on an annual basis. There are two ways to obtain a nonmedical exemption.

1. Submit the Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption *signed by* an advanced practice nurse (APN), pharmacist, physician (MD, DO), physician assistant (PA), or registered nurse (RN), licensed in Colorado, or
2. Submit the Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption you will be able to access upon completion of the state's Online Immunization Education Module.

Find certificates and the Online Immunization Education Module at cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions.

How's your school doing on vaccinations?

Annually, schools must report immunization and exemption numbers (but not student names or birthdates) 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](#).

Your child's school's immunization rates from the 2022-23 school year. Find previous years' data at COVaxRates.org .		
School name	2022-23 MMR immunization rate (required)	2022-23 MMR exemption rate (required)
Schools may choose to include rates for other school-required vaccines		
Vaccinated Children Standard 95% immunization rate for all school-required vaccines	2022-23 DTaP immunization rate	2022-23 DTaP exemption rate
	2022-23 Tdap immunization rate (for grades 6-12)	2022-23 Tdap exemption rate (for grades 6-12)
	2022-23 HepB immunization rate	2022-23 HepB exemption rate
	2022-23 Polio immunization rate	2022-23 Polio exemption rate
	2022-23 varicella immunization rate	2022-23 varicella exemption rate

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.

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.