



March 23, 2016

Don't Wait, Vaccinate: 2016-17 School Immunizations

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Did you know vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective ways to prevent disease? Help your children stay healthy by making sure they are immunized **before** the start of the school year, and get extra credit for protecting others who might come into contact with them. There are some children and adults who are unable to get immunized because of certain medical conditions. When you immunize your children, you not only help to protect your family and friends, you also help keep your entire community safe from certain, preventable diseases.

The current school year will soon be coming to a close. While you and your family are preparing for the end of school and thinking about fun summertime activities and vacations, please remember to include immunizations in your plans. Scheduling your children now for the vaccines they will need to start the next school year will help you cross one item off your hectic "back-to-school" list this fall.

Immunizations should be part of your child's regular school physical **before** they enter kindergarten and seventh grade. Students attending Pennsylvania schools must be immunized according to the following schedule in order to attend school:

PENNSYLVANIA REQUIRED CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE	
<p>Students entering kindergarten are required to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 doses of tetanus* (1 dose, age 4); • 4 doses of diphtheria* (1 dose, age 4); • 3 doses of polio; • 2 doses of measles; ** • 2 doses of mumps; ** • 1 dose of rubella (German measles); ** • 3 doses of hepatitis B; and • 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine or history of disease. <p>*Usually given as DTP or DTaP or DT or Td ** Usually given as MMR</p>	<p>Students entering seventh grade are required to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap) if five years have passed since last tetanus immunization; and • 1 dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV).

If your child doesn't have any insurance coverage or if your insurance does not cover back-to-school immunizations, children can get the required vaccines for little or no cost at one of the commonwealth's state health centers or local health departments. Please call 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) to get more information or to schedule an appointment.

For more information regarding immunizations required for school-aged children living in Pennsylvania, please call your child's health care provider, school nurse or visit www.dontwaitvaccinate.pa.gov.

Sincerely,

Karen Murphy, PhD, RN
Secretary of Health

Pedro A. Rivera
Secretary of Education