

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

March 23, 2010

Dear Parents of Students in Colorado Schools, K through 12th Grades,

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 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 2010-11 school year. Included in the following list are websites where you can go to find out more about the diseases and the vaccines.

Required Vaccines

- **Hepatitis B (Hep B)** – Three doses are required for all students K through 12th grades to protect against a serious liver disease that can lead to liver damage, liver cancer and death: <http://www.immunize.org/hepb/>
- **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 6th through 12th 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 protect adolescents from the whooping cough or pertussis disease and it will prevent them from infecting infants and smaller children in the family:
<http://www.immunize.org/tetanus/> <http://www.immunize.org/pertussis/>
<http://www.immunize.org/diphtheria/>
- **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: <http://www.immunize.org/polio/>
- **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 and 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:
<http://www.immunize.org/measles/> <http://www.immunize.org/mumps/>
<http://www.immunize.org/rubella/>
- **Varicella or Chickenpox (Var)** – Two doses are required for children in kindergarten through 3rd grade and one dose is required for children in 4th through 10th grades. This vaccine protects against chickenpox disease, a rash illness that can lead to skin infections, pneumonia, swelling of the brain and on occasion, death: <http://www.immunize.org/varicella/>

Parents often have concerns or want more information on the safety of vaccines. The Colorado Immunization Program has a web page for parents (under the “Resources” section) with several parent-friendly links that will provide the most accurate information on vaccines: <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/immunization/family.html>

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 or to locate low cost vaccines contact 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.*

Exemptions

It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to have his or her child immunized unless the child is exempted. A student may be exempted from receiving the required immunization in the following manner:

- 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

Sincerely,

The Colorado Immunization Program
Website: www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/immunization
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
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