



State of North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services

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New Immunization Requirements for
Kindergarten, 6th Grade, and College Students

RALEIGH– It's almost time for students to head back to school, so there's not much time left to make sure students are in compliance with immunization requirements. There are new immunization requirements for Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis) and mumps vaccines that affect students this year.

The new rule states that a booster dose of Tdap vaccine is required for the following individuals:

- All students attending public school who are entering the 6th grade on or after August 1, 2008, if five years or more have passed since the last dose of tetanus/diphtheria toxoid.
- All students not attending public schools (i.e., private, home-school, non-traditional schools) who are 12 years of age on or after Aug. 1, 2008, if five years or more have passed since the last dose of tetanus/diphtheria toxoid.
- Individuals enrolling in college or university for the first time on or after July 1, 2008, if a tetanus/diphtheria toxoid or tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis vaccine has not been administered within the past 10 years.

This rule change also impacts mumps vaccination. Individuals are now required to receive a second dose of mumps vaccine before enrolling in school, college or university for the first time.

"Since these vaccinations are required, children will be able to receive the booster dose of Tdap and second dose of mumps at no charge," said Beth Rowe-West, RN, BSN, and Head of the Immunization Branch.

"Parents simply need to set up an appointment with their child's physician or local health department to receive the immunization prior to school entry. The vaccine will be provided at no charge; however, the physician may charge a small fee to administer it."

Parents must show proof of their child's vaccination in the form of a copy of the Certificate of Immunization. This certificate should be presented to the child's school to show proof of vaccination for Tdap or mumps. Parents have up to 30 calendar days from the first day of attendance to present the required up-to-date immunization record for the child. If the child's immunizations are not up-to-date, the required immunizations must be obtained or the process of obtaining immunizations must have begun within the same 30-day period.

At the end of the 30 calendar day period, any child without a Certificate of Immunization showing that the child has received the required vaccines shall be suspended from school until he/she provides a Certificate of Immunization as required by law or shows that he/she has begun the immunization process.

"These rule changes were designed to help reduce the incidence of whooping cough and mumps diseases among North Carolinians," said Rowe-West. Whooping cough is a highly contagious respiratory infection.

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Most children are fully protected against it prior to entering kindergarten, but immunity to whooping cough wanes after about 10 years. “This rule allows us to reduce the impact of this deadly disease and better protect our children by boosting their immune systems.”

For more information about the immunization rule changes visit www.immunizenc.com or contact Amy Caruso at 919-707-5555.

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