

New Vaccine Requirements for Students in Middle and High School

Tdap and Varicella Vaccines

Fact Sheet for Parents



Parents of Middle and High School Students:

Changes in the Wisconsin Student Immunization law now require two different vaccines for middle and high school students. Parents are required to have their children vaccinated or claim a waiver. Use the attached Student Immunization Record to record the date(s) of immunization(s) or claim a waiver.

1. What grades are affected and what vaccines are required?

For the 2011-2012 school year, the following is required:

| <u>Students entering</u> | <u>Vaccine(s)</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Grades 6 through 9 | Tdap (1 dose) and Varicella (2 doses) |
| Grades 10 through 11 | Tdap (1 dose) |
| Grade 12 | Tdap (1 dose) and Varicella (2 doses) |

The varicella vaccine protects against chickenpox. Previously only one dose was required, now a second dose is required.

Tdap is the adolescent combination vaccine that protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough). Only one dose is required.

2. What do parents need to do?

Have your child vaccinated with Tdap and/or varicella vaccine if he or she has not already received the vaccine(s). Record the date(s) of the immunization(s) in the bold outlined box(s) on the enclosed Student Immunization Record, sign it and return it to your child's school. Be sure to add the Tdap and varicella vaccine dates to the permanent immunization record you keep for your child at home. In the future, your child may need to give these dates to other schools, colleges or employers.

To claim a waiver for health, religious or personal conviction reasons, follow the instructions on the Student Immunization Record and return the signed form to your child's school.

3. Are there exceptions to the Tdap and varicella vaccine requirements?

Yes. If your child had received a tetanus-containing vaccine (such as Td vaccine after an injury) within the last 5 years of entering the grade it is required, your child is compliant and Tdap vaccine is not required. Check the box marked "Td" on the Student Immunization Record, enter the date it was received and return the signed form to school.

If your child had chickenpox disease or shingles, even after the 1st dose of varicella vaccine, further doses of the vaccine are not required. Check the “Yes” box to the chickenpox disease question on the Student Immunization Record and return it to school.

4. If my child meets the Tdap and varicella requirements will he or she need to get another dose in a different grade in school?

No. When a child meets the vaccine requirements for the grade to which the requirements apply (i.e., receives the vaccine or does not receive the vaccine because of an exception (see #3 above), no further doses are required. For example, if a child received a dose of Td vaccine because of an injury within 5 years of entering 6th grade, that child has met the Tdap requirement (even though s/he has not actually received Tdap vaccine) and will not be required to receive Tdap vaccine now or in a future grade.

5. If my child already had pertussis (whooping cough) disease, should he or she still get the Tdap vaccine?

Children who have had pertussis disease should receive Tdap because the length of protection provided by disease is unknown and because the diagnosis can be difficult to confirm. A previous history of pertussis is not an exception to the Tdap requirement.

6. Where can I get Tdap and/or varicella vaccine for my child?

These vaccines are available from your child’s doctor or local health department. Please have your child immunized well in advance of school opening to avoid the late summer rush at doctor’s offices and immunization clinics.

7. Why are these requirements being made?

From 1986 through 2004, Wisconsin had the 5th highest rate of pertussis in the nation with almost 5,000 cases being reported in 2004 alone. Pertussis outbreaks occur because protection declines 5-10 years after completion of childhood DTP/DTaP vaccinations. Tdap is a new vaccine that is recommended for adolescents and is anticipated to help prevent pertussis from occurring, including pertussis outbreaks in schools. Pertussis is a serious disease, particularly in young infants, and it can place a significant burden on families, as a person with pertussis must stay home from work and school for a minimum of 5 days of antibiotic treatment.

Two doses of varicella vaccine have been shown to be more effective than one dose, and prevents “breakthrough disease,” a mild form of the disease that can result in several lost school days.

Recommendations for both Tdap and varicella vaccines are made by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
BUREAU OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM
P-00039 (08/10)