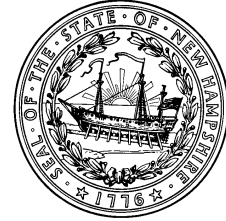


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Change in New Hampshire Childhood Vaccination School Requirements

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announces changes to the vaccination requirements for school children. Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, children entering elementary school, sixth graders, and those who turn 11 years of age will be affected. This change, under New Hampshire law, RSA 141:C, involves the chickenpox and tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap) vaccines.

This year, a child who is 11 years of age or older, must receive a one-time dose of Tdap vaccine if it has been 5 years or longer since the last documented dose of a tetanus immunization. If a child has a medical contraindication to pertussis vaccine, the child shall receive a vaccine that only covers tetanus and diphtheria. All incoming kindergarten students, 1st graders, and 6th graders who do not have a history of chickenpox disease will be required to have two valid doses of chickenpox (varicella) vaccine. Kindergartners who have had chickenpox will be required to show documentation of immunity by a confirming laboratory test. History of disease as reported by a healthcare provider, or parent, is acceptable for 1st grade through 12th grade, and should be documented in the student's school record.

“Immunization requirements are established to ensure that students have the protections they need to keep them healthy and to maintain a healthy environment in which to learn and achieve,” said Dr. José Montero, Director of Public Health at DHHS. “Vaccines are the single best advance in public health in the last century and have saved countless lives. We owe it to our children to protect them.”

The Department urges all parents who have children enrolling in elementary school and sixth grade, and parents who have children turning 11 years of age to contact their primary care provider to see that all immunizations are up to date prior to the first day of school.

The State of New Hampshire does allow for children with medical and religious exemptions. However, during an outbreak of a communicable disease for which immunization is required, by law, an exempted child may be asked to stay at home for a number of days. For additional information about vaccinations, go to www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/IMMUNIZATION/default.htm or call the NH Immunization Program at 1-603-271-4482.

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