

NEWS RELEASE



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Parents reminded to check children's immunization records — before exclusion day

Required vaccines have changed for 2011

The new year will be here before we know it, and the Oregon Immunization Program wants to remind parents that now is the time to make sure kids' vaccination records are complete. State law requires that all children in public and private schools, preschools, Head Start and certified child care facilities have up-to-date immunizations, or have a religious or medical exemption.

Parents or guardians will receive a letter in late January or early February 2011 if their child's immunization record shows that he or she has not received the required vaccinations. Children will not be able to attend school or child care starting Feb. 16, 2011, if their records on file show missing immunizations.

"The goal is to make sure children are fully protected against vaccine-preventable diseases. If school and child care shot records are not up-to-date, the child will be sent home," said Lorraine Duncan, Oregon Public Health Division immunization manager.

This year, parents should take note of some new information:

Hib vaccine requirement: Hib is a severe bacterial disease that mostly affects young children. In recent years, there was a shortage of this vaccine, so children weren't required to be up-to-date on Hib immunizations to stay in child care and preschool. Hib vaccine, which is now plentiful, is back on the required list for children through age 4.

Tdap vaccine requirement: Tdap vaccine is required for seventh-, eighth- and ninth-graders. Tdap is a tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough) booster. Whooping cough is a serious health concern in Oregon with more than 255 cases recorded this year. In California, whooping cough is at epidemic levels; there have been about 6,800 cases reported this year, and 10 babies have died.

(cont.)

Hepatitis A vaccine requirement: The hepatitis A vaccine, which protects against a communicable viral infection, is a two-dose series now required for children 18 months through second grade.

Parents seeking immunizations for their children should contact their health care provider or local health department, or call Oregon SafeNet at 1-800-SAFENET or 1-800-723-3638. No one can be turned away from a local health department because of the inability to pay for required vaccines. Additional information on school immunizations can be found at www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/imm/school. Follow the Oregon Immunization Program on Facebook and Twitter.

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