

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

June 4, 2018

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Make Sure Your Children are Up-to-Date on Immunizations Before School Starts

BISMARCK, N.D. – Summer is just starting, but the new school year will be here before we know it. The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is encouraging parents to get their children up-to-date with school-required immunizations now, rather than waiting until school starts in the fall.

New school immunization requirements will go into effect with the 2018-2019 school year. One dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) is required for students entering grades 7 through 10. A second dose of MCV4 is required for those entering grades 11 and 12. Most adolescents have not yet received the second dose of MCV4. MCV4 protects against meningococcal disease, a serious bacterial infection that can cause meningitis and possibly lead to death or permanent disability within hours of first symptoms.

School immunization requirements for students entering kindergarten have remained the same. Students in all grades should be compliant with immunization requirements before starting school. All students must be compliant by October 1 of this year or be excluded from school until they meet requirements.

“Vaccine preventable diseases can easily spread in school settings if immunization rates aren’t high enough,” said Lexie Barber, epidemiologist with the NDDoH. “Herd immunity prevents diseases from spreading, but can only be maintained when immunization rates are at or above 95 percent. Ensuring students are up to date on immunizations is the best way to maintain a healthy environment for students to learn.”

If you haven’t done so already, check with your healthcare provider or local public health unit to find out which vaccines your child needs. Once your child is up to date on immunizations, please be sure to get a copy of their immunization record to submit to their school.

Before entering school in North Dakota, children must have:

- five doses of DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis),
- four doses of IPV (polio),
- three doses of HBV (hepatitis B),

- two doses of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), and
- two doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine.

In addition, students entering grades 7 through 12 must be up to date on Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis) and MCV4 (meningococcal disease).

- One dose of Tdap is required for students entering 7th through 12th grade.
 - One dose of MCV4 is required for students entering 7th through 10th grade.
 - A second dose of MCV4 is required for students entering 11th and 12th grade.
- Students who receive their first dose of MCV4 after the age of 16 only need one dose.

Cost should not be a barrier to getting children up-to-date on immunizations. If your child is American Indian, Medicaid-eligible, uninsured or your insurance does not cover vaccines, children can receive vaccines at no cost through the Vaccines for Children Program (VFC). Speak to your health care provider or local public health unit if you believe your child would be eligible for VFC vaccines.

For more information on school immunization requirements, contact Lexie Barber, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2335, or visit our website at <http://www.ndhealth.gov/Immunize/Schools-ChildCare/>.

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