

Changes to School Immunization Requirements – Fall 2011

To bring Massachusetts' school immunization requirements up to date with several recent recommendations made by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the Department of Public Health (DPH) has made changes to the school immunization requirements. The following changes will be effective **fall of 2011** (not the fall of 2010):

Vaccine Requirements:

- 2 doses measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine for entry to kindergarten, 7th grade, full-time college freshmen and health science students (currently 2 doses of measles and 1 dose of mumps and 1 dose of rubella vaccine are required for these groups)
- 2 doses varicella vaccine for entry to kindergarten, 7th grade, full-time college freshmen and health science students (currently 1 dose of varicella vaccine is required for entry to kindergarten and 7th grade and there is no varicella requirement for college)
- 1 dose Tdap for entry to 7th grade, full-time college freshmen and health science students (currently 1 dose of Td is required for these groups)

Criteria for Immunity for College Students:

Revised criteria for immunity to measles, mumps, rubella and varicella for college students:

- Students may be considered immune to measles, mumps and rubella if
 - the student presents laboratory evidence of immunity;
 - born in the United States before 1957 (with the exception of all full- and part-time students in a health science program who may be in contact with patients).
- Students may be considered immune to varicella if
 - the student presents laboratory evidence of immunity;
 - the student presents a statement signed by a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant or a designee that the student has a reliable history of chickenpox disease;
 - the student has a self reported history of disease verified by a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant;
 - born in the United States before 1980 (with the exception of all full- and part-time students in a health science program who may be in contact with patients).

Definitions:

- The definition of 'Certificate of Immunization' has been revised to also allow nurse practitioners and physician assistants, in addition to physicians, to sign and date the form or letter. The definition was also clarified to require the month and year of administration as well as the type/name of the vaccine administered in both electronic and hard copy documentation.

There are **no** changes to the school immunization requirements for the 2010-2011 school year. These changes do **not** go in to effect until **fall 2011**. We are providing this information now so that providers can begin to catch-up children and adolescents who do not currently have the immunization that will be required for school entry beginning in September 2011. Starting catch-up vaccinations now will help to ensure that children have the immunizations that they need for school entry in the fall of 2011, as well as prevent a large rush to offices for immunizations during the summer of 2011. The current Massachusetts school immunization requirements can be found on our website: www.mass.gov/dph/imm.

If you have any questions about current or future school immunization requirements, please contact the Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at 617-983-6800.

Reminder: state-supplied vaccines are **available** for catch-up of all children through 18 years of age, regardless of insurance status:

- Tdap vaccine*
- Varicella vaccine*
- MMR vaccine*
- MCV4 vaccine
- Hepatitis A vaccine*

Please order and have these vaccines available for your patients.

*These vaccines are also available for adults seen in public sector settings.