

Immunization Requirements for All Students Entering 7th Grade Tdap and Meningococcal Vaccines

Dear Parents or Guardians,

The Iowa Department of Public Health has made a change to the Iowa Immunization Law that requires all children entering 7th grade, if born on or after September 15, 2000 (regardless of the interval since the last tetanus/diphtheria containing vaccine) to receive one dose of **Tdap vaccine** before the beginning of the school year. Tdap protects against tetanus (lockjaw), diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough).

Pertussis (whooping cough) is a very contagious disease that causes coughing fits and makes it hard to breathe. It is easily spread through the air when an infected person coughs. In 2012, there were 1647 cases of pertussis in Iowa, compared to only 232 the previous year. This new requirement will help prevent the spread of this very dangerous disease. It protects not only your child, but also the people around them.

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), Bureau of Immunization, has completed the administrative rules process to require **meningococcal (A, C, W, Y) vaccine** for students enrolling in 7th and 12th grades. The administrative rule change was effective January 11, 2017, and will be implemented at the beginning of the upcoming 2017-2018 school year.

The change requires a one-time dose of meningococcal (A, C, W, Y) vaccine received on or after 10 years of age for applicants in grades 7 and above, if born after September 15, 2004; and 2 doses of meningococcal (A, C, W, Y) vaccines for applicants in grade 12, if born after September 15, 1999; or 1 dose if received when applicants are 16 years of age or older.

Meningococcal disease caused by any serogroup is very serious. Approximately 10 to 15% of people with meningococcal disease die even with appropriate treatment. Of those who recover, up to 20% suffer from serious after-effects, such as permanent hearing loss, limb loss, or brain damage. Meningococcal vaccines are very safe and effective at preventing meningococcal disease. The meningococcal vaccine is 85 - 100% effective at preventing infection from the subtypes of meningococcus found in the vaccine. The National Immunization Survey (NIS) Teen, 2015 results indicate 75% of Iowa adolescents 13-17 years of age have received one dose the Meningococcal (A, C, W, Y) vaccine. The national average for one dose of meningococcal vaccine is 81.3%. The meningococcal secondary school vaccine requirement will help Iowa achieve and maintain high adolescent vaccine coverage levels, protecting the health of adolescents, friends, families, and communities.

Please make sure these vaccines are complete prior to the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year. No provisional will be issued. If you have any questions, please contact the school.

Thank you,
Elizabeth Shirley, RN
School Nurse