

School Immunization Law

- Fact Sheet for Parents -

Dear Parents:

The Wisconsin Student immunization law was recently changed. Two different vaccine requirements were added which may affect your child's compliance with the law. The change went into effect with the beginning of the 2008/09 school year. Parents are required to have their children vaccinated or claim a waiver by indicating their choice on the attached Student Immunization Record and returning it to their child's school. The following fact sheet should help answer your questions about the new requirements:

New Tdap and Varicella Immunization Requirements for Students

1. Why are these requirements being made?

From 1986 through 2004, Wisconsin had the 5th highest rate of pertussis (whooping cough) in the nation with almost 5,000 cases being reported in 2004 alone. Pertussis outbreaks occur because protection declines 5-10 years after completion of childhood DTP/DTPaP vaccinations. Tdap is a new vaccine that is recommended for adolescents and is anticipated to help prevent pertussis from occurring including pertussis outbreaks in schools. Pertussis can place a significant burden on children and parents as a person with pertussis must be isolated for a minimum of 5 days of antibiotic treatment.

Two doses of varicella vaccine have been shown to be more effective than one dose in preventing "breakthrough disease" cases of chickenpox in children of all age groups.

Recommendations for both Tdap and varicella vaccines are made by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices to the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

2. What are the new requirements, what grades are affected and when will they begin?

The Wisconsin Student Immunization Law will require:

- 1 dose of **tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap)** for students entering **6th, 9th, and 12th grades**, and
- 2 doses of **varicella (chickenpox) vaccine** for students entering **Kindergarten, 6th, and 12th grades** beginning in the 2008/09 school year.

3. What do parents need to do?

Have your child vaccinated with Tdap and/or varicella vaccine if he or she has not already received the vaccine(s). Record the date(s) of the immunization in the bold outlined box(s) on the enclosed Student Immunization Record, sign it and return it to your school office.