

NEWS RELEASE

Public Health - Madison & Dane County

(PHMDC)

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It's Time to Check on Back to School Vaccinations

Is your Child Ready?

Madison WI – August 20, 2015 - The back to school rush is on. PHMDC (Public Health Madison and Dane County) is urging parents to add immunization updates to their back to school to-do lists. State law requires vaccines for students in all grades, with changes in requirements for those entering kindergarten and 6th grade. Vaccines are safe and effective. They offer basic protection for your child against diseases but also protect others with weak immune systems, such as infants, older adults and those taking medication. Protecting your child also helps protect others.

Parents of incoming kindergarteners are informed of vaccine requirements at school registration and most are immunized. However, the addition of the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis/whooping cough) vaccine to the requirements for incoming 6th graders finds many unprepared for the new school year in terms of required vaccinations.

In 2014 the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) reported that more than half (1,035 of the 1,750) of incoming 6th graders did not have the required one dose of Tdap less than a month before school started, according to Sally Zirbel-Donish, Health Services Coordinator for MMSD. Currently 838 of 1,951 incoming 6th grade students had not received Tdap, with less than 2 weeks until school begins. Students not meeting the requirement for vaccines by mid October may be excluded from school until immunized.

Clinics may have limited openings for immunizations in fall, especially as flu season is also beginning. *Don't delay.* Call for an appointment right away to make sure that your new 6th grader is up to date for the Tdap vaccine. Public Health-Madison and Dane County offers free immunizations for children and adults with no health insurance and also for children under 19 years of age with Badger Care. Call PHMDC at (608) 266-4821 for an appointment. More information is available online at <http://www.publichealthmdc.com/disease/immunizations/>

To find your 6th grade student's current immunization record, check the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR) online, or contact your child's health care provider. To check WIR online, go to: <https://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/PR/> Click on the Public Immunization Records Access hyperlink and enter the requested information to access you or your child's records. This registry shows immunization records and vaccines recommended for Wisconsin residents.

Other immunizations recommended at this age include meningococcal disease (a serious brain infection) and HPV (human papilloma virus) to prevent cancers.

Get a great start to the school year by making sure your child is fully immunized.

For more information on immunizations see our website at <http://www.publichealthmdc.com/disease/immunizations/>

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An online version of this release is available at

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/news/its-time-to-check-on-back-to-school-vaccinations>