



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM  
CORDELL HULL BUILDING, 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR  
425 - 5TH AVENUE NORTH  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243

March 9, 2010

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Beginning July 1, the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) has new immunization requirements for children enrolling in child care and school. Children who start pre-school, pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, or are a new student starting school in Tennessee for the first time, all will need a new official Tennessee Certificate of Immunization to provide to the school or child care provider when asked for an immunization certificate. This letter can answer some basic questions you may have about these changes.

**Why have the requirements changed?**

Tennessee has not changed requirements in 10 years, and we needed to update the requirements to better protect children's health. Vaccines are required to protect children from serious diseases, especially those that can spread easily in a school or pre-school setting.

**What kinds of vaccines are required?**

Vaccines required for school or pre-school are just some of the routine vaccines given to all infants and young children. A list of the required vaccines is attached to this letter. If you have questions about what vaccines your child has had, talk to your child's healthcare provider. If your child needs a vaccine, we suggest that you schedule a complete check up if it has been more than a year since his or her last physical exam.

**What if I can't afford the vaccines?**

Cost should not prevent you from vaccinating your child. Children and teens younger than age 19, who have TennCare or don't have health insurance, can receive free vaccines through the federal Vaccines for Children ("VFC") Program in participating private medical offices and health departments. Ask your child's health care provider if they participate in VFC. If your child has insurance that doesn't pay for vaccines and you can't afford them, local health departments can provide the vaccine. Health departments and VFC providers charge a small administration fee to give the free vaccine, which can be adjusted based on your income.

**When and where do I get the certificate?**

Health care providers will be able to use the new certificate beginning in April. If you pre-register for fall classes before you get the new certificate, you should bring in the new certificate before classes start. Parents and guardians must get the certificate from a health department or health care provider licensed in Tennessee.

**Questions**

You can find out more about the vaccine requirements online at <http://health.state.tn.us/CEDS/required.htm> or you can contact your healthcare provider or local health department. For general information about vaccines, visit [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines). For questions about school policies or health examinations, contact your local school system.

Best wishes for a safe and healthy school year!

Kelly L. Moore, MD, MPH  
Medical Director, Tennessee Immunization Program

## **Immunization Requirement Summary: Tennessee Department of Health Rule 1200-14-1-.29**

(New Requirements Underlined, Effective Dates Italicized in Parentheses)

### **Children enrolling in child care facilities, pre-school, pre-Kindergarten:**

*Infants entering child care facilities must be up to date at the time of enrollment and are required to provide an updated certificate after completing all of the required vaccines due by 18 months of age.*

- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DTaP, or DT if appropriate)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (1 dose of each, usually given together as MMR)
- Varicella (1 dose or history of disease)
- Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib): age younger than 5 years only (*this requirement is resumed immediately, following suspension during a national Hib vaccine shortage 2008-2009*)
- Hepatitis B (HBV) (*July 1, 2010*)
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV): age younger than 5 years only (*July 1, 2010*)
- Hepatitis A: 1 dose, required by 18 months of age or older (*July 1, 2010*)

### **Children enrolling in Kindergarten:**

- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DTaP, or DT if appropriate)
- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (2 doses of each, usually given together as MMR)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV): final dose on or after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday now required
- Varicella (2 doses or history of disease): previously only one dose was required (*July 1, 2010*)
- Hepatitis A: total of 2 doses, spaced at least 6 months apart (*July 1, 2011*)

### **All children entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade (including currently enrolled students):**

- Tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis booster ("Tdap"): not required if a Td booster dose given less than 5 years before 7<sup>th</sup> grade entry is recorded on the DTaP/Td line (*no later than October 1, 2010*)
- Verification of immunity to varicella: 2 doses or history of disease (*July 1, 2010*)

### **Children who are new enrollees in a TN school in grades other than Kindergarten or 7<sup>th</sup>:**

- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DTaP, or DT if appropriate)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (2 doses of each, usually given together as MMR)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV): final dose on or after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday now required
- Varicella (2 doses or history of disease): previously only one dose was required
- Hepatitis B (HBV): previously only for Kindergarten, 7<sup>th</sup> grade entry

### **Children with medical or religious exemption to requirements:**

- **Medical**: Physician or health department authorized to indicate specific vaccines medically exempted (because of risk of harm) on the new form. Other vaccines remain required.
- **Religious**: Requires a signed statement by the parent/guardian that vaccination conflicts with their religious tenets or practices. *If documentation of a health examination is required by the school, it must be noted by the healthcare provider on the immunization certificate. In that case, the provider should check the box that the parent has sought a religious exemption.*

**Minimum ages or dose intervals:** Tennessee follows published CDC guidelines. For vaccines with critical minimum age requirements (e.g., MMR, varicella) or minimum dose intervals, doses are considered valid if given up to 4 days before the minimum age or dose interval. Doses administered more than 4 days early are considered invalid and should be repeated as recommended.

**Alternative proof of immunity for certain diseases:** A positive serology (year of test documented) is acceptable as an alternative to immunization for measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis A, hepatitis B or varicella. For varicella, documentation of provider diagnosed varicella (year) or provider-verified history of disease given by a parent or guardian (year) also is acceptable. By documenting a history of disease, the provider is asserting that he or she is convinced that the child has had chickenpox.

# Vaccine Requirements for Attending Child Care Facilities, Pre-Schools and Schools in Tennessee\*

## Recommended Schedule of Required Doses for Attendance in Child Care / Pre-School / Pre-K and School For Children Who Started Immunizations Before Age 7 Years\*\*

Required Vaccines with footnote numbers in [ ]	2 Months of Age	4 Months of Age	6 Months of Age	12-15 Month of Age	16-18 Month of Age	4-6 Yrs.* (School Entry)	Total Doses Required*** For Checking Complete For School Attendance Box on Immunization Certificate
[1] Hib HbOC or	1	2	3	4			N/A for school (See Footnote [1])
[1] Hib PRP-T or	1	2	3	4			N/A for school (See Footnote [1])
[1] Hib PRP-OMP	1	2		3			N/A for school (See Footnote [1])
[2] PCV	1	2	3	4			N/A for school (See Footnote [2])
[3] DTP, DTaP, DT	1	2	3	4	5		5 or 4 (See Footnote [3])
[4] Polio	1	2		3		4	5, 4 or 3 (See Footnote [4])
[5] Hepatitis B	1	2		3			3 (See Footnote [5])
[6] Hepatitis A					1	2* 7/2011	(See Footnote [6])
[7] MMR				1		2	2 (See Footnote [7])
[8] Varicella				1		2	2 (See Footnote [8])
[9] Tdap							(See Footnote [9])

\*These requirements were established in accordance with the current Recommended Childhood and Catch-Up Immunization Schedules, United States. Tennessee requirements for Kindergarten (5 years) include doses indicated for 4-6 years.

\*\*For children starting immunizations at age 7 years or older, refer to the catch up schedule available at the Department of Health website or the ACIP catch-up schedule for that age available at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines).

\*\*\*Children who are behind schedule may attend while in the process of completing the requirements with minimum intervals as indicated below.

### Minimum Ages For Initial Immunization And Minimum Intervals Between Doses

Vaccine	Minimum Age For First Dose	Minimum interval from dose 1 to 2	Minimum interval from dose 2 to 3	Minimum interval from dose 3 to 4	Minimum interval from dose 4 to 5	With respect to these intervals, 1 month is a minimum of 4 weeks or 28 days.
[1] Hib (Primary Series)						Do not restart any series, no matter how long since the previous dose. Doses given ≤ 4 days before the minimum age or the minimum interval may be counted as valid. Two different live vaccines must be given on the same day or spaced at least 28 days apart.
HbOC & PRP-T	6 weeks	1 month	1 month	See Footnote [1]	N/A	
PRP-OMP	6 weeks	1 month	See Footnote [1]	N/A	N/A	
[2] PCV	6 weeks	1 month	1 month	See Footnote [2]	N/A	
[3] DTP/DTaP (DT)	6 weeks	1 month	1 month	6 months	See Footnote [3]	
[4] Polio	6 weeks	1 month	1 month	See Footnote [4]	See Footnote [4]	
[5] Hepatitis B	birth	1 month	See Footnote [5]	N/A	N/A	
[6] Hepatitis A	12 months	6 months				
[7] MMR	12 months	1 month	N/A	N/A	N/A	
[8] Varicella	12 months	3 months	N/A	N/A	N/A	
[9] Tdap	See Footnote [9]					

### Footnotes

- [1] The number of doses of Hib depends on age at 1st dose and brand of vaccine given. The last dose in the series necessary to meet requirements, whether 3rd or 4th, should be given at least 2 months after the previous dose and not before 12 months of age. One dose is sufficient to meet requirements if it is given at age 15 months or later. Hib is required for children younger than 5 years attending child care facilities. Hib is not required for kindergarten or higher grades and is not indicated for children who have reached the 5th birthday. If given on schedule, PRP-T and HbOC have a 3 dose primary series and a booster after age 12 months. PRP-OMP has a 2-dose primary schedule and a booster after 12 months. Providers are responsible for verifying that the child meets the appropriate schedule for the brand used.
- [2] The number of doses in the PCV series depends on age at 1st dose. The last dose in the series should be given at least 2 months after the previous dose and not before 12 months of age. One dose of PCV is required for all children aged 24-59 months in child care with any incomplete schedule.
- [3] The minimum interval between the 4th and 5th doses is 6 months; it may be given as early as 12 months, but typically is given at age 15-18 months. One dose of DTP/DTaP/DT must be on or after the 4th birthday. If the 4th dose was on or after the 4th birthday, the 5th dose is not needed. The 4th dose should be administered a minimum of 6 months after the 3rd dose. However, the 4th dose does not need to be repeated if administered ≥ 4 months after dose 3. Total doses of diphtheria and tetanus toxoids should not exceed 6 before the 7th birthday.
- [4] The final dose of the polio vaccine series must be given on or after the 4th birthday and at least 6 months after the previous dose. If 4 doses are administered before the 4th birthday, a 5th dose should be given at 4-6 years. If the 3rd dose of an all IPV or all OPV series is given on or after the 4th birthday and at least 6 months after the 2nd dose, a 4th dose is not needed.
- [5] The 3rd dose of Hepatitis B vaccine should be given a minimum of 4 months after the 1st dose and 2 months after the 2nd dose and not before 24 weeks of age.
- [6] One dose of Hepatitis A vaccine is required for all children in child care aged 18 months or greater. The recommended schedule is for two doses to be given, 6 months apart, between 12 and 24 months of age. Effective July 2011, proof of a total of two doses is required by Kindergarten entry.
- [7] The MMR requirement is 2 doses of measles vaccine, 2 doses of mumps vaccine and 2 doses of rubella vaccine. The vaccines may be given as MMR or MMRV (combined antigens) or as single antigens.
- [8] The varicella requirement is for 2 doses of varicella-containing vaccine or history of disease for all students entering K or 7th grade, and new entrants into a Tennessee school in any other grade. These may be administered as single dose varicella or in combination as MMRV.
- [9] Tdap is required for 7th grade entry; Tdap is NOT required if a Td booster dose is recorded as given less than 5 years before 7th grade entry (on the appropriate DTaP / DT / Td line of the certificate).