

School Immunization Requirements for 7th and 12th Graders

The end of the school year for 6th and 11th graders means the start of new beginnings when they become 7th and 12th graders. It also means this new class of students will need to get another round of immunization shots for school before they can start their new journey.



Students entering 7th and 12th grades in West Virginia are required to have the following shots before they can begin classes:

- ✓ **7th graders** must show proof of a dose of Tdap vaccine, which protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough) and a dose of the meningitis vaccine (MCV4).
- ✓ **12th graders** also must show proof of a single dose of Tdap and a second dose of the meningitis vaccine. If the first dose of the meningitis vaccine was given after the 16th birthday, then a second dose is not required.

Here's why it's so important for students at this age to receive these vaccines

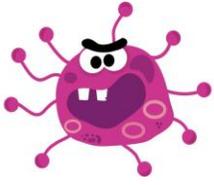
The Tdap shot protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.



Tetanus, or lockjaw, is a serious bacterial infection that affects the nervous system. The bacteria are usually found in soil, dust and manure and enter the body through breaks in the skin. It causes painful tightening of the muscles, usually all over the body. It can lead to "locking" of the jaw so the victim cannot open his mouth or swallow. Tetanus leads to death in about 1 in 10 cases. A vaccine can easily prevent the infection, which has no cure.



Diphtheria is a bacterial infection that can result in neck-swelling and thickening in the throat, which can cause breathing problems. Diphtheria was a common cause of death and illness in U.S. children before vaccination began in the mid-1930s. There have been only a few cases in the past decade, thanks to the vaccine.



Pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, also is a bacterial infection that can cause violent, uncontrollable coughing. If pertussis is passed to infants, it can be life-threatening. Very young children are protected when they get the DTaP vaccine, but protection wears off as kids get older, so adolescents need the DTdap shot.

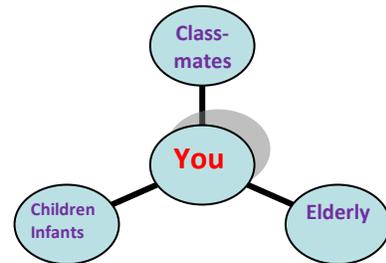


Meningitis is a swelling of the lining around the brain and spinal cord that is caused by a very serious bacterial infection. Meningococcal meningitis can become deadly in 48 hours or less. Even with treatment, people who get meningitis die in about 10 percent of cases. About 20 percent of survivors of meningococcal meningitis have a long-term disability such as deafness, brain damage, or amputated limbs.

There's also an anti-cancer vaccine available for adolescents

While Tdap and meningitis vaccines are the only two shots required for 7th and 12th graders, the CDC also recommends adolescents receive an anti-cancer vaccine, called the HPV vaccine. HPV stands for a family of viruses known as the **human papillomavirus**. Every year, over 27,000 women and men are affected by a cancer caused by one of the HPV strains. Most of these cancers are preventable by giving the HPV vaccine to girls and boys when they are between 11-12 years old.

The adolescent immunization requirements will not only lengthen the time for which immunized students are protected from vaccine-preventable diseases, but also will lower their chances of passing diseases to classmates with weakened immune systems, children and infants, the elderly and others. Immunizations help keep adolescents healthy and prevent problems as they grow older.



Parents should take their child to his or her health care provider for a routine adolescent check-up to determine if their teen's shots are current and meet the school entry requirements. If the child is missing shots, he or she can receive them during that visit.

Children under 19 years old who are uninsured, underinsured, or eligible for Medicaid or WVCHIP qualify for free vaccinations through the Vaccines for Children

(VFC) program. Parents should contact their local health department or their child's physician for more information on this program.

Students over the age of 19 who are uninsured may contact the local health department for vaccinations.

- For information on vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines
- For information about WV School immunization requirements, visit www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/immunization/requirements/Pages/default.aspx