

## Tdap Requirement and Documentation

### What is the new Tdap requirement for 7th Graders?

- **For the 2012-2013 school year**, and all future school years, all students entering, advancing or transferring into 7th grade will need proof of an adolescent whooping cough booster immunization (called “Tdap”) for school in the fall.

### Who is affected by the Tdap requirement?

All public and private schools are affected by the law, including but not limited to

- Charter schools
- Community schools
- Juvenile court schools
- Other alternative school settings

Students who are affected by the law include but are not limited to:

- International or exchange students
- Children in foster care
- Homeless students (see below)
- Students transferring from outside of California to a school in California at any time during the school year

Students who are NOT affected but who are still strongly recommended to receive Tdap include those

- Attending summer school or camp
- 18 years and older

### When should children get vaccinated with Tdap?

Now, Unimmunized children are at risk for catching pertussis, getting really sick and missing weeks of school. Encourage parents to beat the rush by making an appointment for their incoming 7th grader to get a Tdap booster shot now. Children as young as 10 years old are recommended to get vaccinated with Tdap. This will protect them against the ongoing threat of whooping cough and will meet the Tdap school requirement for when they are in 7th grade. Ask parents to keep documentation of the child’s Tdap booster shot in a safe place. Children will need proof of their immunization for school.

### What immunization (vaccine, shot) is necessary to meet the new requirements?

Students affected by the new requirements need documentation of one dose of Tdap to begin classes in the new school year.

Meets 7th - 12th Grade Requirement	Vaccine	When given?
YES, meets the requirement.	Tdap	Given on or after the 7th birthday

Adacel  
Boostrix  
Td  
DECAVAC  
TENIVAC

**NO**, does not meet requirement. DT

DTaP or DTP given before the 7th birthday (usual age limit)  
History of pertussis disease  
Results of blood tests for immunity to pertussis

CDPH currently recommends that all children receive a dose of Tdap vaccine at age 10 years or older. Tdap vaccine given on or after the 7th birthday meets the new school requirement. A dose of DTaP or DTP given at age 7 years or older will also meet the requirement, but it is not licensed for use or recommended for children 7 years of age or older.

Immunization before the 7th birthday does not fulfill the requirement, even if given immediately before the 7th birthday.

**What if a child received a Tdap booster shot before their 10th birthday?**

Children who received a dose of Tdap on or after their 7th birthday will be considered to have met the new school requirement. However, CDPH recommends that children receive Tdap on or after their 10th birthday to provide better protection throughout their adolescent years.

**What if a child received a pertussis shot (Tdap or DTaP) before their 7th birthday?**

Immunization before the 7th birthday does not fulfill the requirement, even if given immediately before the 7th birthday.

**What if my patient had whooping cough as an infant or child?**

Any protection or immunity to pertussis that a child received from having had pertussis as an infant/child will have worn off by middle school, leaving that child vulnerable again to catching pertussis. Booster immunization with Tdap is recommended by state and national authorities and required for school.

**Instead of getting a Tdap booster to meet the new requirement, can a student get a blood test to check for protection (immunity) against pertussis?**

No. Testing for immunity to pertussis is not reliable and will not meet the new school requirement.

**Should teachers, other school staff and family members also get the Tdap vaccine?**

Although school staff and parents are not required to receive the Tdap vaccine, CDPH recommends that all persons 10 years of age and older get vaccinated with Tdap now if they haven't done so already. This will protect them against the ongoing threat of pertussis as well as help protect their close contacts, including young infants for whom pertussis is most severe and sometimes fatal.

### **Why should children get vaccinated with Tdap?**

In addition to it being a new requirement for school, children who get a Tdap booster shot will be better protected during their school years. Immunization helps protect others within the home, in the community, and at school. Immunizations also help prevent school closures. Many schools in California suffered from outbreaks of whooping cough. Students got very sick and parents missed work and lost wages because they needed to stay home and care for their sick children. In some cases, schools had to close because so many teachers were home sick.

### **Why was the Tdap requirement added?**

The new immunization requirement is intended to reduce the spread of whooping cough in California. In recent years the United States has seen an increase in whooping cough. In 2010, California had the most cases of whooping cough reported in over 60 years.

Prior to entering kindergarten, most children are fully protected against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis after receiving the DTaP vaccine in early childhood. However, immunity to these diseases wears off, leaving adolescents vulnerable once again. A booster dose of Tdap during adolescence helps to protect students and their close contacts, including young infants for whom pertussis is most severe and sometimes fatal.

### **What can schools accept as proof of immunization?**

Any immunization record [‘yellow card’, CAIR record (see below), computer printout, immigration record etc.] that includes the following information is acceptable:

- Student’s name
- Date of birth
- Vaccine name or abbreviation,
- Date vaccine administered
- Name (written or stamp) of the clinic, office, or doctor administering the vaccine.

### **I can’t tell from the immunization record whether or not the student received Tdap. What should I do?**

If it is unclear which vaccine the student has received, schools will need clarifying information from the vaccine provider.

### **Is Tdap required for a student whom recently caught whooping cough or experienced a case of whooping cough in the past?**

Past illness with pertussis is not an exemption to the law. Tdap immunization is typically recommended even for those who have had pertussis.

### **How long do students have to wait after their last tetanus shot before getting their required dose of Tdap?**

According to state and national recommendations, the dose of Tdap required for the school law may be given at any time after the last tetanus shot.

### **Where can schools get materials to meet the new Tdap requirement?**

Local health departments are the only source of the following materials for schools:

- Tdap requirement sticker for the Blue Card (PM 286 S)
- Personal Belief Exemption Form

Please contact your [local health department's Immunization Program](#) to request initial or additional supplies. Schools should not try to produce their own versions of these forms or use other forms.

The California Immunization Registry (CAIR) can also be used to print out Blue Cards with the Tdap sticker format; most Tdap information may be filled in automatically if the child has had a dose of Tdap recorded in CAIR.

### **Where can schools get Blue Cards?**

Most students will have a Blue Card in their cumulative file from the time that they were admitted to Kindergarten. Students new to California will need a Blue Card. Additional Blue Cards may be obtained from the local health department's Immunization Program or can be printed from the California Immunization Registry (CAIR) if the student's immunizations have been recorded in CAIR.