



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

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**IMMUNIZATIONS BOOST KIDS'
BACK-TO-SCHOOL PLANS**

State officials highlight new booster shots, encourage everyone to get their flu shot

MADISON— It's back-to-school time, and state health officials are encouraging parents to put immunizations at the top of their lists. While Wisconsin traditionally ranks high on childhood immunizations, parents are advised to be aware of newly recommended vaccines, including seasonal flu shots.

"A healthy school year begins with making sure your child's immunizations are up-to-date. Immunizations help students stay healthy and in school, rather than being sick at home with an illness that could have been prevented," said Department of Health Services Secretary Karen Timberlake.

New state requirements target middle and high school students for a dose of the tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap) and all students for a second dose of the varicella vaccine. The primary focus of the Tdap requirement is to prevent adolescents from contracting pertussis, also known as whooping cough. The second dose of varicella vaccine is to keep children from contracting chicken pox. Wisconsin teen vaccination rates for these two vaccines are well above the national average, according to a recent National Immunization Survey.

The seasonal influenza vaccine is already available in many Wisconsin communities and the recommended target group is now everyone age six months and older, a change made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this summer. "That's a big change, and it reflects the threat that the influenza virus poses to people of all ages," Timberlake said. "And this year's seasonal vaccine includes immunization against the H1N1 virus so there won't be a need to get two separate flu shots."

Vaccinations are recommended not only for children entering grades K-12, but also for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms. These students should be immunized to protect against meningitis and hepatitis B. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to keep track of each immunization received, and to ask their health care provider how to access their child's immunization records through the Wisconsin Immunization Registry.

For information on any of the health topics mentioned here, visit these web sites:

The Wisconsin Immunization Program, www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization

School health programs and related student services, www.dpi.wi.gov/sspw/index.html

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