

**Frequently Asked Questions for  
New Immunization Requirements in Texas Schools, Grades K - 12**  
*(This document has been updated for the 2010 - 2011 school year)*

**Q. *What are the new vaccine requirements? When and why were they added?***

A. Five new vaccine requirements were added in March 2009. The requirements were effective beginning with the 2009 - 2010 school year. The vaccines affected are Hepatitis A, MMR, Varicella, Tdap, and Meningococcal. Changes to the requirements were made in order to update the Texas elementary and secondary school immunization requirements so that they adhere more closely to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations.

**Q. *What grade levels are affected by the new requirements?***

A. For the 2009 - 2010 school year, the new requirements affected kindergarten and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students; one of the requirements (Tdap vaccine) also affected 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Refer to the phase-in schedule located at the DSHS School Requirements web page below to determine when these new requirements will be added to additional grade levels.

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm#requirements>.

**Q. *If a student had a previous illness of the varicella disease (chickenpox), will the varicella vaccine still be required?***

A. No. If a student has had chickenpox, then varicella vaccine is not required. A written statement from a parent (or legal guardian or managing conservator), school nurse, or physician attesting to a child's positive history of varicella disease (chickenpox), or of varicella immunity, will be acceptable in place of any and all varicella vaccine doses required.

**Q. *If a student is entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade and it has been less than 5 years since the last tetanus-diphtheria-containing vaccine was administered, will Tdap vaccine be required?***

A. Students in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade are required to have a booster dose of Tdap only if it has been five years since their last dose of a tetanus-containing vaccine. Students in grades 8 through 12 are required to have a booster dose of Tdap vaccine if it has been 10 years since their previous dose of a tetanus-diphtheria-containing vaccine. Td is acceptable in lieu of Tdap if a contraindication to pertussis exists.

**Q: Will the 5-year booster Tdap requirement for 7<sup>th</sup> graders be phased in to 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade?**

A: No. The new Tdap requirement implemented for the 2009 - 2010 school year will remain the same, and the requirement is as follows:

7<sup>th</sup> grade requirement: one booster dose of a tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis-containing vaccine if at least five years have passed since the last dose of a tetanus-containing vaccine.

8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade requirement: students who have not already received Tdap vaccine are required to receive one booster dose of Tdap when ten years have passed since the last dose of a tetanus-diphtheria-containing vaccine.

**Q. If a student has two doses of measles vaccine but only one dose of rubella and mumps vaccine, will a dose of MMR be required?**

A. For the 2010 - 2011 school year:

Students in 2<sup>nd</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade are required to have two doses of a measles-containing vaccine, and one dose each of rubella vaccine and mumps vaccine. In the above scenario, these students would be in compliance and no additional MMR dose would be required.

Students entering kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are required to have 2 doses of measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine. In the above scenario, the students would need a dose of MMR to complete the mumps and rubella requirement of 2 doses.

**Q. Will there still be a Hepatitis A requirement for kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in counties designated as high risk?**

A. No. The Hepatitis A requirement is now a statewide requirement. For the 2010 - 2011 school year, it is required for students in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. There is no longer a special requirement for counties designated as high risk.

**Q. When will the 'Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students' document be updated?**

A. The document is currently updated for the 2010 - 2011 school year. It can be found on the DSHS School Requirements web page at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm#requirements>.

