

Dear families of fifth or sixth grade students,

Colorado [law](#) requires students to receive a Tdap vaccine **before** their first day of sixth grade. The Tdap vaccine protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.

- **Tetanus** is not a disease that you catch from someone else. The bacteria that causes tetanus live in the dirt and can enter the body through broken skin like cuts or an animal bite.
  - Once under the skin, the tetanus bacteria make a toxin, or poison, that causes pain and muscle spasms. These spasms can make it hard to breathe if they affect the jaw or muscles in the abdomen and chest. The tetanus toxin can also damage the heart.
- **Diphtheria** can cause damage to the heart, kidneys, and nervous system. Even with treatment, one in 10 people with respiratory diphtheria die.
  - Although there are reports of fewer than two cases a year in the U.S., approximately 10,000 cases are reported globally every year. This can occur when immunization rates are low.
- **Pertussis**, also called whooping cough, is very contagious. Coughing follows cold-like symptoms and can last for more than 10 weeks. Coughing can make it hard to breathe, eat, drink, and sleep.
  - Pertussis is one of the most common diseases controlled by vaccines in the U.S.
  - Babies have the highest risk of severe complications from pertussis.

While the Tdap vaccine is often given at age 11, it may also be given as early as 10 years of age, which:

- 1) Counts as a valid dose and,
- 2) Meets the vaccine requirement to attend sixth grade.

Medicare, Medicaid, CHP+, and most private health insurers cover the full cost of the Tdap vaccine. If you need help finding free or low-cost vaccines, go to [COVax4Kids.org](https://COVax4Kids.org), contact your [local public health agency](#), or dial [2-1-1](#) for information on Health First Colorado and vaccines in your area.

If you choose not to have your student vaccinated with Tdap before sixth grade entry, a [certificate of exemption](#) must be submitted to your child's school.

Questions? Contact your child's health care provider or [local public health agency](#).

Dear health care providers of fifth or sixth grade students,

Colorado [law](#) requires students to receive a Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis-containing) vaccine **before** their first day of sixth grade. Students beginning sixth grade may be age 10 or 11.

Colorado law ([6 CCR 1009-2](#)) follows the recommendations of the [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#). Per the [immunization schedule](#):

The adolescent dose of Tdap is typically given at age 11-12 years. Children who receive Tdap at age 10 have been given a valid adolescent dose.

Before school entry, the student's family is responsible for submitting vaccine records that show their student is current for all [school-required vaccines](#) unless a [certificate of exemption](#) is filed with their child's school.

Is your patient catching up on DTaP, Tdap, or Td vaccines? The CDC has developed job aids to assist health care providers in interpreting [Table 2 \(catch-up\)](#) of the child and adolescent immunization schedule.

- [DTaP Catch-up guidance for children 4 months through 6 years of age](#) (PDF)
- [Tdap/Td Catch-up guidance for children 7 through 9 years of age](#) (PDF)
- [Tdap/Td Catch-up guidance for children 10 through 18 years of age](#) (PDF)

Questions regarding the timing and spacing of other school-required vaccines? Refer to CDPHE's immunization tables:

- [School \(K-12\) immunization table](#)
- [Child care and preschool immunization table](#)

The Colorado Immunization Branch provides access to public health nurse consultants who can address vaccine-related questions. Call 303-692-2700, Monday - Friday between 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., or email [cdphe\\_vacs@state.co.us](mailto:cdphe_vacs@state.co.us).