

# Fact Sheet for Parents

## Tdap Requirements for Middle and High School Students



The Wisconsin Student Immunization law requires that all students entering the 6<sup>th</sup> grade receive a dose of Tdap vaccine. To be compliant with the school law, parents must provide their child's school with proof of immunization or claim a waiver.

### 1. What is Tdap?

Tdap is a vaccine that protects against Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (whooping cough).

### 2. What grades are affected and what vaccine is required?

All students entering grades 6 through 12 must have one dose of Tdap.

### 3. What do parents need to do?

Have your child vaccinated with Tdap vaccine if he or she has not already received the vaccine. Record the date of the immunization in the appropriate box on the enclosed Student Immunization Record, sign the form and return it to your child's school. Be sure to add the Tdap vaccination date to the permanent immunization record you keep for your child. In the future, your child may need to give these dates to other schools, colleges or employers.

To claim a waiver for health, religious or personal conviction reasons, follow the instructions on the Student Immunization Record and return the signed form to your child's school.

### 4. Are there exceptions to the Tdap vaccine requirements?

Yes. If your child has received a tetanus-containing vaccine (such as Td) in the five years before he/she enters the grade in which it is required, your child is compliant and is not required to receive a Tdap. Check the box marked "Td" on the Student Immunization Record, enter the date it was received and return the signed form to school.

### 5. Once my child meets the Tdap requirement will he or she need to get another dose in a different grade?

No. Tdap is a one-time requirement. Once a child meets the vaccine requirement for the grade to which the requirement applies, no further doses are required. In other words, a student who receives Tdap before starting 6<sup>th</sup> grade does not need any more doses. If a child received a dose of Td vaccine within 5 years of entering 6th grade, that child has met the Tdap requirement (even though s/he has not actually received Tdap vaccine) and will not be required to receive Tdap vaccine now or in a future grade.

**6. If my child already had pertussis (whooping cough) disease, should he or she still get the Tdap vaccine?**

A history of pertussis disease is not an exception to the Tdap requirement. Children who have had pertussis should still receive Tdap because the length of protection provided by the disease is unknown and because the diagnosis can be difficult to confirm in some instances.

**7. Where can I get Tdap vaccine for my child?**

Tdap is available from your child's medical provider, local health departments and some pharmacies. Please have your child immunized well in advance of school opening to avoid the late summer rush as doctor's offices and immunization clinics.

**8. Why is Tdap required?**

Pertussis is a serious disease. It is easily passed from person-to-person and can cause outbreaks in schools. Wisconsin has experienced two state-wide pertussis outbreaks in the past 10 years. People who are ill with pertussis must stay home from work or school for at least five days. Studies have shown that the protection gained from the DTP/DTPaP vaccines received as a young child begins to decline 5 to 10 years after vaccination; the Tdap vaccine will boost that immunity and help protect your adolescent from pertussis.

**9. Are there any other vaccines that are recommended for my adolescent?**

Yes. There are three other vaccines that are routinely recommended for teens. The Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV) vaccine protects against a virus that is a common cause of cancer. The meningococcal conjugate vaccine protects against meningococcal disease (meningitis), and an annual influenza vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older.

**10. Where can I get more information?**

- Center for Disease Control (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pertussis/default.htm>
- Wisconsin Immunization Program: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/pertussis.htm>
- Your child's medical provider or local health department



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