

New School Requirements for 2011 Whooping Cough (AB 354)

Informational message for SCFHP Web site

New School Requirements Whooping Cough

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Under a new California law that takes effect in July 2011, all California middle and high school students must be vaccinated against pertussis (whooping cough) for this upcoming 2011-2012 school year. Beginning July 1, 2011, all students entering **into 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades** will be required to show proof of a 'Tdap' booster shot before **starting** school. This requirement applies to all public and private schools.

Pertussis (whooping cough) is a bacterial infection that can cause serious coughing fits that make it hard to breathe. Whooping cough is a serious disease that mostly affects babies under 1 year of age who are too young to be fully vaccinated. Each year hundreds of babies are hospitalized for whooping cough and some die. Parents should know that the protection from childhood pertussis immunizations wear off and that adolescents and adults who have not had a booster shot for whooping cough can get the disease and then spread it to young babies who are most at risk. In order to protect young babies, it is important for older children and adults to get their Tdap booster shots.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends that parents get their child vaccinated early to avoid the rush. All California parents who have students in middle and high school are encouraged to get their kids vaccinated well before the fall 2011 school year begins. There will be no grace period and the regulations will be strictly enforced. Parents should be aware that the protection from childhood immunizations of pertussis wears off, and adolescents may be at risk of catching and spreading whooping cough without a Tdap booster. Ask your child's pediatrician for the Tdap vaccine. Your child's school will be asking for your child's yellow immunization card as proof they have received the vaccine.

Information about Getting Immunizations for Your Child

Children should get their Tdap booster directly from their pediatrician or medical provider during their scheduled adolescent health check-up. To obtain a whooping cough vaccination for your child, please see your regular health care provider.

- To learn more about the new immunization law, please visit the CA Dept. of Public Health website.