

GET IMMUNIZATIONS UP-TO-DATE BEFORE SCHOOL EXCLUSION DAY FEBRUARY 17

News Release from **Oregon Health Authority**
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Parents must provide schools, child care facilities with children's vaccine records

February 17 is School Exclusion Day, and the Oregon Immunization Program is reminding parents that children will not be able to attend school or child care starting that day if their records on file show missing immunizations.

Under state law, all children in public and private schools, preschools, Head Start and certified child care facilities must have up-to-date documentation on their immunizations, or have an exemption.

"Immunization is the best way to protect children against vaccine-preventable diseases such as whooping cough and measles," said Stacy de Assis Matthews, school law coordinator in the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division. "It keeps schools and the entire community safe and healthy."

Information for parents about updated vaccine requirements:

-- The hepatitis A vaccine, which protects against a communicable viral infection, is a two-dose series required for children 18 months and older in child care, preschool and kindergarten through seventh grade.

-- Parents of children with old exemptions on file signed before March 2014 will need to submit updated documentation. If the child has received the vaccines, the parent needs to turn in the immunization dates to the school. If the parent wants a nonmedical exemption, the parent needs to turn in a Vaccine Education Certificate showing that they've received education about vaccines, either from a health care practitioner or from the online vaccine education module. The parent also needs to sign a new Certificate of Immunization Status. More information about exemptions can be found at the division's vaccine exemption website at www.healthoregon.org/vaccineexemption.

If school and child care vaccination records are not up-to-date, the child will be sent home. In 2015, local health departments sent 29,234 letters to parents and guardians informing them that their children needed immunizations to stay in school or child care. A total of 4,666 children were kept out of school or child care until the necessary immunization information was turned in to the schools or child care facilities. Letters to parents will be mailed on or before Feb. 3.

Parents seeking immunizations for their children should contact their health care provider or local health department, or call 211Info--just dial 211. No one can be turned away from a local

health department because of the inability to pay for required vaccines. Pharmacists can immunize children 7 and older. Parents should contact their neighborhood pharmacy for details.

Additional information on school immunizations can be found at the Immunization Program website at www.healthoregon.org/imm. Follow the Oregon Immunization Program on Facebook.