



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Public Health – Women’s & Children’s Health Section  
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Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor

Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary

April 20, 2009

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** UCVDP Providers

**FROM:** Beth Rowe-West, RN, BSN, Head *Beth*  
Immunization Branch

**SUBJECT:** Tdap Vaccine Requirement for Adolescents

The purpose of this memo is to remind you of the requirement for students entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade in public schools, and those 12 years of age in non-public schools, to receive a dose of Tdap vaccine, if it has been at least 5 years since their last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine.

This requirement became effective for the 2008-09 school year, and its implementation presented many challenges for healthcare providers and schools. In an effort to address the issues that have arisen with this requirement, the Immunization Branch has developed a question and answer document for healthcare providers and school nurses. **You are strongly encouraged to review this document carefully, and retain it for future reference.**

Printed educational materials related to the Tdap requirement have been updated and may now be ordered from the Immunization Branch by completing the enclosed order form. Providers and schools should be actively working to ensure that students who are required to receive Tdap for school entry for 2009-10 are vaccinated as early as possible, and prior to the start of the school year.

Questions about the Tdap requirement should be directed to the Regional Immunization Nurse assigned to your area or to the central office of the Immunization Branch at 919.707.5550.

CC:	SMT Regional Immunization Staff WCH Nursing Consultants Jessica Gerdes	CO Staff Local Health Directors Joy Reed	Ron Helder Steve Shore Peter Graber	Rebecca Reeve Sherry Lehman Gerri Mattson
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## Q&A for School Nurses and Providers on Tdap Requirement

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*A booster dose of tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis vaccine is required for individuals attending public school who are entering the sixth grade on or after August 1, 2008, if five years or more have passed since the last dose of tetanus/diphtheria toxoid.*

*A booster dose of tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis vaccine is required for individuals not attending public schools who are 12 years of age on or after August 1, 2008, if five years or more have passed since the last dose of tetanus/diphtheria toxoid.*

*However, pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine is not required for individuals between 7 years of age through the fifth grade for those attending public schools and 7 through 12 years of age for those not attending public schools.*

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**When administering Tdap to students, please remind the parent that they MUST provide written documentation of the immunization to the school, and keep a copy of the written documentation for their records.**

### **Why are the Tdap requirements different for public school students vs. non-public school students?**

Some non-public schools do not use a grade level system, so it was necessary to designate an age rather than a grade level for students not in public school to receive Tdap. Therefore, for students not in public school, Tdap is required at age 12.

### **Are rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders in public school who are 10 years old required to receive Tdap?**

Yes. Rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders who are 10 years old are NOT exempt from the Tdap requirement. There is an FDA approved Tdap vaccine for 10 year olds. Therefore, if it has been at least 5 years since the child's last tetanus-containing vaccine, rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders must be immunized. Providers are encouraged to stock both Tdap vaccines to assure rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders are vaccinated appropriately.

### **Are rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders in public school who are 9 years old required to receive Tdap?**

No. A child entering sixth grade at age 9 would NOT be required to receive Tdap because there is no FDA approved Tdap vaccine for 9 year olds. A medical exemption is NOT required in this situation, and the school is not required to track the child.

### **If a public school student has not received Tdap within 30 days after enrollment in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and they are eligible to receive it, can I accept an appointment card from a health care provider and consider them "in process"?**

No. Tdap is a one time vaccination that is readily available at any local health department. A student should not have to delay vaccination in order to have a doctor's exam or visit. In addition, providers who receive state supplied vaccine have agreed not to place conditions on receiving immunizations, such as requiring a physical exam before vaccination. If parents prefer their child have a doctor visit prior to vaccination with Tdap they should plan accordingly, and schedule this well in advance of the school deadline.

### **If a student was medically exempt at an earlier age from DTaP due to the pertussis component, should the student receive Tdap?**

Most of the reactions that small children experience after DTaP such as prolonged crying and high fevers are not contraindications to Tdap. The ACIP states that only the following are valid contraindications and precautions to Tdap vaccine:

#### **Contraindications**

- Serious allergic reaction (i.e., anaphylaxis) to any component of the vaccine.
- History of encephalopathy (e.g., coma or prolonged seizures) not attributable to an identifiable cause within 7 days of administration of a vaccine with pertussis components.

#### **Precautions**

- Guillain-Barré syndrome <6 weeks after a previous dose of a tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine.
- Progressive neurologic disorder, including progressive encephalopathy, or uncontrolled epilepsy, until the condition has stabilized.

#### **Temporary Deferral**

- Moderate or severe acute illness with or without fever. Defer Tdap or Td vaccination until the acute illness resolves.
- History of an Arthus reaction following a previous dose of a tetanus toxoid-containing and/or diphtheria toxoid-containing vaccine, including MCV4 (see Safety Considerations for Adolescent Vaccination with Tdap or Td section for a description of an Arthus reaction).

**Refer to ACIP statement on Tdap use in Adolescents for full information. This statement can be found on-line at [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5503.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5503.pdf)**



**I have a public school student who is repeating the sixth grade. Are they subject to the Tdap requirement?**

Yes -- the requirement applies to all students entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade, whether it be for the first time or the second time, or the fourth time.

**I have a student whose parent refuses to allow them to have Tdap vaccine. What do I do?**

Tdap for eligible sixth graders in public school and 12 year olds in non public school is a requirement of state law, just like the vaccines required for kindergarten entry. Unless the child has a properly documented medical or religious exemption, they may not attend school 30 days after enrollment in 6<sup>th</sup> grade for public school students or after the 13 birthday for students not in public school, if a parent refuses to vaccinate by that time. Philosophical exemptions from immunizations are prohibited by North Carolina law.

**If a 10 year old accidentally is given Adacel (which is not FDA approved for 10 year olds) instead of Boostrix do they need to have the dose repeated?**

No, per CDC recommendations, it is not necessary to repeat the dose in this situation.

**Does Tdap contain Thimerosal?**

Neither brand of Tdap vaccine contains thimerosal.

**If it is close to the thirty-day deadline and we still have a lot of students who haven't received Tdap, can we extend the deadline more than thirty days past school entry?**

No. The Tdap requirement is state law. Therefore, neither school systems nor local health departments have the authority to suspend or change the law.

NC Immunization Branch 04/09



# FREE!

## Vaccine Requirements – Materials Order Form



(Effective 2008-09 school year and beyond)

Resources for Providers




Materials are **FREE** to order!

Please **FAX** your order to 1-800-544-3058


### Provider Education Materials

Item	Picture	Description	Quantity in English	Quantity in Spanish
<b>Tdap Requirement Flyer</b>		Contains details about the Tdap requirement, available to providers as an educational resource. (8.5x11)		N/A
<b>Pocket Guide for Clinicians</b>		Quick reference guide for providers re: school immunization requirements at kindergarten, sixth grade and college entry. (3.5x9)		N/A

### Patient Education Materials – for Kindergarten, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, & College Requirements

<b>Is Your Child Ready Postcard – for Kindergarten Entry</b>		Reminder/Recall postcard for parents of rising kindergarten students with information about the immunization requirements. (8.5x5.5)		
<b>Is Your Child Ready Postcard – for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Entry</b>		Reminder/Recall postcard for parents of rising 6 <sup>th</sup> grade students with information about the immunization requirements. (8.5x5.5)		
<b>Parent Education Flyer for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Vaccine Requirements</b>		FAQs for parents of rising 6 <sup>th</sup> grade students, contains information about the rule change, vaccine and disease. (8.5x11)		



<b>Is Your Teenager Ready Postcard – for College Entry</b>		Reminder/Recall postcard for parents of students about to enter college with information about the immunization requirements. (8.5x5.5)		
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Please complete the contact information below. Send your request to the N.C. Immunization Branch by fax to 1-800-544-3058. Please allow at least two weeks for delivery. All of the materials are also available on the Internet, and can be downloaded at no cost at [www.immunizenc.com](http://www.immunizenc.com).

<b>Contact Name:</b>	
<b>Organization:</b>	
<b>Address (No PO Box):</b>	
<b>City/State:</b>	
<b>Zip:</b>	
<b>Telephone:</b>	