

Tdap: Frequently Asked Questions

In school year 2009-2010, all Oregon 7th and 8th graders are required to have one dose of Tdap vaccine, if it's been at least five years since receiving their last Tetanus containing vaccine. A medical or religious exemption is acceptable.

What is Tdap?

Tdap is a vaccine that was licensed for use in 2005. It is given to adolescents and adults who are 10-64 years of age. It helps boost protection against three diseases: Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (whooping cough).

What are Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis?

- Tetanus is a disease that is caused by bacteria found in soil or manure that enters the body through cuts, punctures, or other wounds. Tetanus is also called lockjaw because it causes severe muscle spasms, especially in the jaw, neck, and chest muscles that control breathing.
- Diphtheria is an infection of the mouth, nose and throat that most often affects children under 15 years of age. Ten percent of the victims of this disease die.
- Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory disease that is also known as whooping cough. Pertussis can cause rib fractures from severe coughing and pneumonia, and can result in hospitalization and death. Infants are most at risk for serious Pertussis disease and death, and adolescents and adults can spread this disease to them. In the last several years, four babies in Oregon have died from Pertussis disease. The most common sources of Pertussis in children are caregivers and loved ones: parents, grandparents, siblings, daycare workers, health professionals, and teachers can carry the disease but don't realize they are passing it on.

My student had a vaccine called DTaP when he was a child. Is this the same as Tdap?

No, DTaP and Tdap protect against the same three diseases, but the vaccines are different. DTaP is given to children younger than 7 years of age, and Tdap is given to adolescents 10 years and older. The Tdap shot is necessary to boost immunity against these three diseases.

My student got a Td booster less than 5 years ago. Does she need Tdap now?

No, but Oregon law will require Tdap when it's been five years since the last Tetanus containing vaccine. However, if your student is ever around babies, including siblings, cousins, or babysitting, talk to your doctor about getting Tdap now. Infants are most at risk for serious Pertussis disease, and adolescents and adults can unknowingly spread this disease to them.

Should students older than 7th or 8th grade get Tdap vaccine?

Yes, one dose of Tdap is recommended for all adolescents if they haven't had a Td booster in the past five years. The requirement for Tdap will be phased in one grade level per year through 12th grade in school year 2013-2014.

Should adults get Tdap vaccine?

Yes, adults through 64 years of age should get one dose of Tdap to replace their next Tetanus booster. If you haven't had a Tetanus shot in the last 10 years, or if you're ever around babies, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about getting Tdap now.

Hepatitis A: Frequently Asked Questions

In school year 2009-2010, all children in first grade, kindergarten, preschool, Head Start, and childcare are required to have two doses of Hepatitis A vaccine. One dose of Hepatitis A vaccine is required to start kindergarten, preschool, or childcare, and the second dose should be given 6 months after the first dose. A medical or religious exemption is acceptable.

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a virus that can cause liver damage. Many children under six years of age do not show any symptoms if they are infected, but about 100 people in the U.S. die from the disease every year.

How is Hepatitis A spread?

Hepatitis A is spread from person to person via the fecal-oral route, by inadequate hand washing after using the toilet or changing a diaper. It can also be contracted from eating contaminated foods. In the past several years, there have been outbreaks of Hepatitis A in Oregon restaurants and schools, and from eating contaminated foods including frozen strawberries and green onions.

Who should get the Hepatitis A vaccine?

The Hepatitis A vaccine is recommended for all kids in Oregon 1-18 years of age, and for people at high risk of Hepatitis A, such as travelers. The vaccine is given in 2 doses, with the second dose recommended to be given six months after the first.

Do children need Hepatitis A to start 1st grade, kindergarten, preschool, or childcare in the fall?

Yes, one dose of Hepatitis A is required to start 1st grade, kindergarten, preschool, childcare, or Head Start in the fall. The second dose is required by one year after the first dose, but it can be given as soon as six months after the first dose.

If a child has only one dose of Hepatitis A vaccine, will she be excluded from school or childcare in February?

It depends. If it's been over a year since the first dose of Hepatitis A vaccine, the child will be issued an exclusion order for February exclusion. If it's been less than a year, an exclusion order won't be sent.

Should older students get Hepatitis A vaccine?

Yes, two doses of Hepatitis A vaccine are recommended for all children through 18 years of age if they haven't received the vaccine yet. The requirement for Hepatitis A vaccine will be expanded one grade level per year through 5th grade in school year 2013-2014. In 2014-2015, two doses of Hepatitis A vaccine will be required for all students in grades K-12.

Should adults get Hepatitis A vaccine?

Yes, but you should check with your doctor to see if you should receive Hepatitis A vaccine. Hepatitis A is often a more serious disease in adults than children. Some adults that should get the Hepatitis A vaccine include international travelers to certain areas and people with liver diseases.