

New Vaccination Requirement

The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) will require the Tdap vaccination for all students entering 7th grade beginning with the coming school year (2012-2013).

The Tdap vaccine (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) has previously been a recommended vaccination for this age group since 2006, and 41 other states have already implemented this particular vaccination requirement.

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, has increased in frequency across the country in recent years, as protection from the childhood pertussis vaccine has become weaker over time in the adolescent population.

"By vaccinating our adolescents, we can decrease illness in this group and reduce exposure and illness in infants," said State Health Officer Dr. Mary Currier. "Pertussis can be particularly deadly for newborns, and it is essential to limit their exposure to the disease since they are too young to receive a vaccine against it."

Additional recommended vaccinations for preteens include those against meningococcal disease, human papillomavirus (HPV), and a second dose of varicella vaccine for those who have not received one at an earlier age.

"We still strongly recommend the Tdap vaccine for all adolescents, however it is only required for those entering seventh grade," said Dr. Currier.

The required Tdap vaccination and other recommended vaccinations are available at health department clinics throughout the state and through all Vaccines for Children (VFC) providers for a \$10 administrative fee per vaccine.

For information on required vaccinations for school entry and recommended vaccinations for all ages, visit the MSDH website at www.HealthyMS.com or call us at 1-866-HLTHY4U (1-866-459-4948.)

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