



West County
Health Centers

Caring for our Communities

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Frequently Asked Questions About Childhood Vaccination

At West County Health Centers, we understand that navigating the vaccination requirements for children attending public school in California can be confusing and overwhelming.

To help our patients, we have created this webpage with the purpose to clarify the commonly asked questions that our community has regarding vaccine requirements. Additionally, we provide links to websites that offer reliable and consistent information about vaccine safety.

If you have questions that are not answered on this webpage or the links attached, please schedule an appointment with your primary care provider by sending a message through the patient portal or by calling your clinic.

Vaccines, Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Which vaccines are required for my child to attend public school?

- 1) DTaP/Tdap = diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis vaccine
- 2) Hep B = hepatitis B vaccine
- 3) MMR = measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine
- 4) Varicella = chickenpox vaccine
- 5) IPV = polio vaccine

2. How many doses of each vaccine does my child need to attend public school?

This depends on the age of your child and when they received the first dose of a particular immunization.

Consult the California Immunization Requirements K-12 Grade pages from the Shots for School website to learn the requirements as to the number and timing to administer each vaccine here:

<https://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-231.pdf>

3. My child is behind on their immunizations required for school. Can they be brought up to date at a West County Health Center clinic?

Yes. Please schedule an appointment by sending a message through the patient portal or calling your child's primary care clinic. Your child's healthcare provider will work with your family to come up with a safe, efficient vaccine update schedule that is in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations.

Prior to your appointment, consult the CDC vaccine schedules here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/imz/catchup.html>

4. **I heard that the law on immunization medical exemptions recently changed, is this true?**

Yes. Under Senate Bills (SB) 276 and SB 714, all new medical exemptions to enter school and childcare must be issued through the system CAIR-ME beginning January 1, 2021. Medical exemptions can only be issued by doctors with MDs or DOs licensed in California and must meet applicable Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#), and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) criteria.

Please refer to the Shots for School website that goes into details about the laws in place regarding vaccine Medical Exemptions here: <https://www.shotsforschool.org/laws/exemptions/>

5. **Will a doctor MD or DO at WCHC be able to fill out a CAIR-ME form so my child can get a medical exemption?**

This is case-by-case dependent. All medical providers at WCHC follow the guidelines outlined by the CDC, ACIP and AAP to determine if a person requires a medical exemption for a vaccine. If you are concerned that your child should require a medical exemption for a vaccine(s), please schedule an appointment with their primary care provider to advise you.

Prior to the appointment, please refer to the CDC guidelines about contraindications for commonly administered immunizations:

https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/general-recs/contraindications.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fvaccines%2Frecs%2Fvac-admin%2Fcontraindications-vacc.htm

6. **My child already had chickenpox (the varicella virus) in the past. Do they still need to receive the varicella immunization?**

Not necessarily, but we need to prove your child is immune to the varicella (chickenpox) virus first. To do so, your child will need a blood test that looks at their antibody levels. If your child has not had this test, please schedule an appointment with their primary care provider to order the test. Once the test is complete and your child is proven to be immune to the virus, the parents and medical provider will need to complete a CAIR-ME form to be submitted to the school. If your child is not immune, they can receive the varicella vaccine series at their WCHC clinic.

Here is the link to access the CAIR-M system: <https://cair.cdph.ca.gov/exemptions/home>