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Is Your Child Fully Prepared to Head to School?

Health officials remind parents to be certain their child is up-to-date on vaccinations

Monday, July 14, 2014 | **Contact:** Media & Communications: Phone: 225.342.1532, E-mail: dhhinfo@la.gov

BATON ROUGE, La. -

The new school year is approaching, is your child ready? Preparation isn't limited to getting uniforms and school supplies. Every child should be protected before heading to the classroom and that means being certain they are up-to-date on their childhood vaccinations. The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals reminds parents that ensuring children have received their necessary vaccinations is not only important, it's the law.

"Other parts of the country have seen a resurgence of measles, including Houston, which had a large outbreak last year," said DHH Secretary Kathy Kliebert. "These vaccinations protect our children from these terrible diseases. Getting vaccinated is a simple process with big rewards. These vaccines help keep children healthy, so they can spend more days in the classroom learning and out of the doctor's office."

Louisiana law requires children age four or older who are entering kindergarten, pre-kindergarten or Head Start programs this year have proof they have received the following vaccinations:

- a booster dose of Poliovirus vaccine (IPV)
- two doses of Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccine (MMR)
- three doses of Hepatitis vaccine (HBV)
- two doses of Varicella (chicken pox) vaccine (Var)
- a booster dose of Diphtheria Tetanus Acellular Pertussis vaccine (DtaP)

Children in Daycare need to be up-to-date with their age-appropriate immunizations.

Children who are 11 or older and are entering the sixth grade this year must have proof they have received all of the age-appropriate immunizations listed above, and at this age, children also need proof of receiving:

- meningococcal (meningitis) vaccine
- Tetanus Diphtheria Acellular Pertussis vaccine (Tdap)

"When we don't vaccinate, we leave the door open for the return of diseases such as measles and whooping cough, which continue to be a threat to babies, children and adults in the United States," said DHH Immunization Medical Director Dr. Frank Welch. "School vaccination laws have helped eliminate major vaccine-preventable diseases. So, avoid the rush and take the time now to schedule your children for their back-to-school vaccinations."

Vaccines have proven safe and effective in preventing illness and death from many infectious diseases. Having kids vaccinated keeps them healthy and in school, protects other children and family members from getting sick, and allows children to lead longer, more productive lives.

Parents should contact their child's doctor to have children vaccinated. Children who are eligible to receive vaccinations at Parish Health Units are those that have Medicaid, those without insurance, American Indian/Alaskan native, or children who are insured but their insurance company does not cover specific vaccinations. View DHH's [interactive parish map](#) to find a parish health unit in your area. Those children who have insurance should contact their private provider for vaccination services.

Parents can obtain copies of their child's immunization record from their child's physician or from a Parish Health Unit or a Federally Qualified Health Center. If parents are not able to submit proof of updated immunizations, their children will need to be re-vaccinated to get an updated immunization record.

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CONTACT US...

Mailing Address: Department of Health & Hospitals | P. O. Box 629 | Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629

Physical Address: 628 N. 4th Street | Baton Rouge, LA 70802 | *PHONE: 225.342.9500 | FAX: 225.342.5568 | Disclaimer Custodian of Records*

Medicaid Customer Service 1-888-342-6207 **Bayou Health** 1-855-BAYOU4U (1-855-229-6848)



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