

FAQ – Tdap School Vaccination Requirement

What are the changes regarding the Tdap school vaccination requirement?

In April 2018, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) changed the minimum recommended age for the tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (Tdap) adolescent booster vaccine from 10 to 11 years. Although the vaccine is approved by the FDA to be given at a younger age as part of a catch-up-schedule, a routine adolescent booster dose of Tdap should be administered at no one younger than 11 years of age.

To align with current guidelines, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation effective July 1, 2019, that changes the grade in which students are evaluated for receipt of the Tdap vaccine from sixth to seventh grade.

Can a student be conditionally enrolled if the student is under 11 years of age and has not received the Tdap vaccination?

Yes. If a student under 11 years of age has not received a dose of the Tdap vaccine, BUT has had one dose of a tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis containing vaccine (e.g. DTaP), they may be conditionally enrolled in school. If a student does not have one dose of such a vaccine, they must begin a catch-up schedule. Once a student turns 11, they should receive the booster dose of the Tdap vaccine and are adequately immunized for their age and compliant with the vaccine requirement.

Should students under 11 years of age wait to receive the first does of the Tdap vaccine?

Yes. If a student is following a routine vaccination schedule according to ACIP recommendations, a student must be 11 years of age to receive the booster of the Tdap vaccine. If the student is in need of a catch-up vaccine schedule, he may receive a Tdap vaccine as early as age 7 years.

An 11 year old, fully vaccinated, rising seventh grader seeks to enroll today. She received her Tdap vaccine at 10 years old. Will the Tdap dose be acceptable for entry into seventh grade?

According to the Code of Virginia, the student has met the requirement by having a Tdap dose prior to seventh grade. Thus, no additional action is necessary for school admission. Parents should consult with the student's healthcare provider regarding an additional Tdap now that the student is 11 years of age.

A 12 year old, fully vaccinated, rising seventh grader seeks to enroll today. He received his Tdap vaccine at 11 years old prior to sixth grade. Does he need to get another Tdap vaccine prior to seventh grade?

According to the Code of Virginia, the student has met the requirement by having a Tdap dose prior to seventh grade. Thus, no additional action is necessary for school admission.

An 11-year-old student inadvertently received a dose of Td instead of Tdap. He/she received a 5-dose series of DTaP in childhood. Does the student need to get the Tdap vaccine prior to admission to school? If so, how much time must go by before the Tdap can be administered?

Yes, the student needs to receive the Tdap vaccine. Td does not contain the required booster for acellular pertussis required prior to entry to seventh grade. The student should receive a Tdap vaccination dose as soon as possible.