



Frequently Asked Questions regarding ‘No Shots, No School’

1. Why are immunizations (vaccines) important?

Many diseases, such as measles, mumps, and hepatitis, are very contagious. These diseases are especially dangerous for our youngest residents and for those throughout the District who have weakened immune systems. In order to prevent the spread of these diseases, it is important that we make sure all District residents are fully immunized. This means that everyone should be up-to-date on all required vaccines so that we can keep our city healthy.

In recent news, we have seen the alarming effects of not having enough of the population up-to-date on all required vaccines. Between January 1 to July 24, 2015, 183 people from 24 states and the District of Columbia were reported to have measles. This measles outbreak is related to people who have not received their vaccines and then pass the disease on to others who have not received their vaccines. Most of these cases [117 cases (64%)] were part of a large multi-state outbreak that reportedly started at one amusement park in California.¹

2. What shots are required for my child and how do I know which shots they have already received?

If you have questions about your child’s immunization history, please talk to your medical provider or call the Department of Health’s Immunization Program at (202) 576-7130. For a listing of the Department of Health immunization requirements per age group, please visit <http://doh.dc.gov/service/immunization>.

3. My child does not have all of their vaccinations. Will my child be excluded from school?

DC law states that any student who does not show proof of being up-to-date on all required vaccines (as described by the Department of Health) will not be allowed to attend DC public schools and DC public charter schools. Families have ten (10) school days from the date of written notification to turn in proof of all required vaccines. Starting in school year 2016-17,

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>



students will be sent home from any public school (DCPS or charter) if they failed to turn in proof of required vaccines within the 10 days of written notification.

For the Fall 2015 school year, schools will follow existing policies and will provide outreach to families with children who are not up-to-date on all required vaccines. For questions about No Shots, No School, please email ImmunizationQuestions@dc.gov.

4. I am pretty sure that my child has all their required shots but the school told me that my child is missing a few. What can I do?

If the school tells you that your child is not compliant and you believe that your child has already gotten all of their required vaccines, please contact your medical provider or call the Department of Health's Immunization Program at (202) 576-7130 and request a copy of your child's Universal Health Certificate.

Proof of immunization means that your medical provider completes the Universal Health Certificate, enters the information electronically into the District of Columbia Immunization Information System (DOCIIS),² and gives you a copy of the Universal Health Certificate so that you can turn it in to your child's school. This Universal Health Certificate will be signed by a medical provider and will state that the child has been successfully immunized with all required vaccines (as described by the Department of Health). Every DC public and PC public charter school student is required to turn in a valid Universal Health Certificate with proof of all required vaccines before the first day of school.

5. How does the school know my child has all their required shots?

In order to make sure that DC residents are protected against preventable contagious and dangerous diseases, the District of Columbia uses a computer system that receives and stores childhood and adult vaccine records. This computer system is called DOCIIS (District of

² See https://immunization.doh.dc.gov/imm/DC_ImmReg_Parent_brochure_7-21-2009_final.pdf for information on the Immunization Registry. If you have any further questions regarding this registry, please consult your medical provider or call the Department of Health's Immunization Program at (202) 576-7130.



Columbia Immunization Information Registry)³. DOCHS can be accessed online at clinics, schools, and managed care organizations and allows providers to see what immunizations people have and do not have.

6. What if I don't want my child immunized?

Immunizations are important to maintain the safety and well-being of your child and your community. Therefore, there are only a small number of exceptions to the immunization requirements. First, a parent of a medically vulnerable child may opt-out of vaccinations by submitting a Physician Certificate regarding medical concerns.⁴ Second, a parent who holds religious beliefs that conflict with immunization may opt-out by submitting informed, written objections citing religious beliefs. Third, a parent who wishes to opt-out of the HPV vaccination may opt out by submitting the Opt-out Certificate.

7. What if the earliest appointment I could get for my child is after the start of school?

If you cannot schedule an appointment during your provider's regular hours or prefer to see another medical provider, you can find a listing of providers with extended summer hours by visiting <http://dme.dc.gov/node/1097602>.⁵

8. What if I don't have a primary care provider or if I don't have medical insurance?

If you do not have a primary care provider or doctor, please call your insurance company to find one close to your home.

If you do not have medical insurance, please contact the Department of Human Services Economic Security Administration at (202) 727-5355 or DC Health Link at (855) 532-5465 for help. You can also visit <https://dchealthlink.com/>.

³ See https://immunization.doh.dc.gov/imm/DC_ImmReg_Parent_brochure_7-21-2009_final.pdf for information on the Immunization Registry. If you have any further questions regarding this registry, please consult your medical provider or call the Department of Health's Immunization Program at (202) 576-7130.

⁴ Please consult your medical provider if you believe that your child fits within this exception.

⁵ You can also find a listing of immunization related events by visiting this link.



9. Where can I go to learn more about communicable diseases and immunizations?

The Department Of Health provides resources and information about vaccines (immunizations) and preventable diseases. You can access this information by visiting

<http://doh.dc.gov/node/112192>.

10. I still have questions about immunizations or the No Shots, No School program.

Who can I call?

If you have questions about which immunizations are required for your child, please talk to your medical provider or call the Department of Health's Immunization Program at (202) 576-7130.