



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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#### ADPH announces immunization requirements

##### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The state rules governing immunization have changed to better protect Alabama's young children and adolescents. Recent amendments affect preschoolers and students entering sixth grade.

- Effective immediately the rules require pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) for attendees of congregated care centers such as child care and home daycare centers.
- Effective for the upcoming 2010-2011 school year, the rules will require all students entering sixth grade to have a tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccination if they are 11 years of age or older.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends that PCV be administered to all children ages 2 to 59 months. The vaccine should routinely be given at ages 2, 4, 6 months, and 12 through 15 months of age. This vaccine also may be given to children 60 to 71 months of age in certain high-risk groups.

PCV helps prevent invasive disease caused by certain types of the bacterium called *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. These diseases include bloodstream infections and meningitis.

In addition, each student 11 or older who enters the sixth grade will be required to have a new certificate of immunization. This is because of the change from tetanus-diphtheria (Td) to tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine.

The Tdap vaccine will protect adolescents from pertussis and keep them from spreading disease to siblings, other family members and other students. The Tdap school requirement will go up by one higher grade each school year. For example, Tdap will be required for students entering seventh grade in 2011-2012, eighth grade in 2012-2013, up through twelfth grade in 2016-2017.

"Pertussis cases have increased in Alabama, and one of the age groups with the highest rates nationally is the adolescent group," said Winkler Sims, director of the Immunization Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health. "Having the requirement for the sixth grade will allow schools to more easily track expiration dates on certificates and so help identify who needs to be vaccinated."

More information is available by calling 1-800-469-4599 toll free and at [www.adph.org/immunization/](http://www.adph.org/immunization/).

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