

FAQ and Information about Vaccinations and Exemptions

If a student is missing any vaccine or exemption form:

1. Give them a handout listing clinics that provide immunization resources, such as walk-in immunizations.
2. If you are receiving the immunization record at the time of enrollment send the Conditional Enrollment Notice to the student's legally responsible individual.
3. Parents have 21 calendar days to provide up to date immunization records, have their child immunized, bring an exemption form, or immunity letter.
4. Remember, students can attend school during the 21-day calendar conditional enrollment period.

Decreasing the number of exemptions in Utah schools is Imperative to Stop Vaccine-Preventable Disease Outbreaks in Utah.

If a legally responsible individual requests an exemption, they must:

1. Complete the exemption module at www.immunize-utah.org or go to a local health department (local health departments **may** charge a fee of up to \$25 but completing the module on-line is free).
2. Print and bring the exemption form to the school after completing the module.
3. Refer to your school nurse if:
 - o Parents are concerned about the number of vaccinations their student requires to be in compliance.
 - o If you can see the student has received other vaccinations in the past.
 - o If parents have questions regarding vaccines that you are unable to answer.

FAQ about School Immunization Exemptions and vaccines:

1. **What can parents expect if there is a vaccine preventable disease outbreak in their child's school?**
 - o Unvaccinated children will be excluded from school, sports events, or other organized activities during disease outbreaks (up to or longer than 21 days).
 - o Parents will need to have a plan in place for childcare and missed schoolwork during this time.

2. **Why do vaccines matter?**

Community Immunity happens when the majority of people in a community are vaccinated. It creates a protective cocoon around those who are unable to be vaccinated.

- o Because more people are choosing not to vaccinate, community immunity does not exist in many Utah schools. Subsequently, vaccine-preventable diseases (e.g. Measles, Chickenpox, and Pertussis-Whooping Cough) are infecting un-vaccinated children, resulting in many hospitalizations and even death.
- o Unvaccinated children can spread vaccine preventable diseases to others such as:
 - o Children who are too young to be vaccinated (infants).
 - o People who have medical conditions that prevent them from being able to be vaccinated.
- o This could result in long-term complications and even death for those who are unable to receive vaccines.

Vaccines prevent many serious childhood diseases that cause childhood illness, disability, and in many cases death.

- Potential long-term consequences of not vaccinating your child:
 - Polio can lead to paralysis. Measles can lead to learning disabilities, loss of vision, and loss of hearing. Mumps was the leading cause of Meningitis until the vaccine was introduced. Rubella causes birth defects.

In the past 60 years, vaccines have eradicated Smallpox and we are close to eradicating Polio.

3. Are vaccine preventable diseases still around?

- **Yes**, vaccines prevent more than 2.5 million deaths each year.
- With a dramatic decrease in vaccine preventable diseases, vaccines are the victims of their own success.
- It is difficult for U.S. citizens to remember the potential devastating effects of these diseases such as polio.
- Increasing exemption rates correlate with an increase of outbreaks of measles, whooping cough, and mumps in the United States.

4. Can vaccines cause autism?

- **No**, vaccines do not cause autism. Numerous studies over decades have proven that there is no link between autism and vaccines. All vaccines undergo a long and careful review.

5. What are the side effects of vaccines?

- Common side effects of vaccines (such as tenderness and redness at the injection site) are mild.
- Serious side effects (such as allergic reactions) are very rare.
- When parents choose not to vaccinate their child, they are trading the small risk of side effects from the vaccine for the risk of getting a vaccine-preventable disease.

For more information on vaccines and the diseases they prevent, contact your healthcare provider, local health department, or the Utah Immunization Program at 1-800-275-0659 or visit www.immunize-utah.org.

***Free or low-cost vaccines** are available for those who qualify through the Utah Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program.

Children through 18 years of age who meet at least one of the following criteria are eligible to receive VFC vaccine at **local health departments or participating private providers**.

- Children through age 18 enrolled in:
 - Medicaid
 - Utah Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Without health insurance coverage
- Children who are Under-insured
 - A child who has commercial (private) health insurance but the coverage does not include vaccines
 - A child whose insurance covers only selected vaccines
 - A child whose insurance caps vaccine coverage at a certain amount
- American Indian or Alaska Native decent

Local Immunization Resources: (Include on following page) **To be attached by each school.**