

Back to School: Immunizations & Sports Physicals

School is almost in session, which usually involves a lengthy checkoff list of things to do prior to the first day of class. An important thing parents and caregivers should consider is making sure children are up to date on their immunizations and vaccinations per state and school requirements. Ensuring children, teenagers, and college bound students are up to date on their immunizations is essential in the protection and overall health of classmates, family, and the community as a whole. The Indiana State Department of Health has released a 2019-2020 list of both required and recommended immunizations by grade.¹

Required immunizations include:

- Hepatitis A and B
- DTap (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
- Polio
- Varicella (Chickenpox)
- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
- MCV4 (Meningococcal)

Recommended immunizations include:

- Annual influenza
- HPV (Human Papillomavirus)

The Centers for Disease Control also has published guidelines for children at different age groups, including information on child immunization schedules, online resources for patients/caregivers, the Vaccines for Children program (VFC), and the Immunization Action Coalition which shows mandated immunizations per state/region of the U.S.²

Another important reminder when going into a new school year is making sure student athletes receive their yearly sports physical. Approximately 3.5 million children and adolescents ages 14 and younger get hurt annually playing sports or participating in recreational activities.³ Sport physicals also recognized as a pre-participation exam are assessments that evaluate the following:⁴

- The student's overall health
- Fitness level
- Existing injuries
- Conditions that could increase the likelihood of injury while participating in sports
- Physical maturity

Additional education for families should include but are not limited to: the importance of hydration, making sure any sports required gear fits properly, incorporating a balanced diet, and to report any sports related injuries to your primary care provider.⁵

Resources:

1. <https://www.in.gov/isdh/files/2019-20%20School%20Requirements%20IIC%20Final.pdf>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/features/catchupimmunizations/index.html>
3. <https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=sports-injuries-statistics-90-P01650>
4. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/11694-sports-physicals>
5. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/sports-injuries/10-tips-for-preventing-sports-injuries-in-kids-and-teens>