

New Tdap Vaccine Requirement for 7th Graders Begins This Fall

The vaccine for whooping cough, tetanus, and diphtheria is now required for 7th graders going to school in Iowa. The new requirement starts at the beginning of upcoming 2013-2014 school year. The new law requires a one-time booster dose of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis-containing vaccine (Tdap) for kids entering 7th grade AND who are born on or after September 15, 2000; regardless of how long it's been since the last Tdap vaccination. A Tdap booster is also strongly recommended for teens and adults who haven't already had a booster shot.

Iowa is below the national average for Tdap vaccination rates. In 2012 Iowa experienced a 417% increase in the number of pertussis cases compared to the average over the past five years. Because the Tdap vaccination does not provide lifelong protection, a booster vaccination in 7th grade will help reduce school outbreaks. Kids with pertussis can miss five or more days of school and risk infecting classmates, friends and family especially younger siblings who are at higher risk of complications or death from pertussis.

Anyone can get pertussis, also known as Whooping Cough. Pertussis is a bacterial infection. Pertussis bacteria make several toxins that cause children to develop sticky, thick mucus that clogs the windpipe and causes painful spasms of coughing. When the child breathes in it causes a whooping sound and can make it difficult for children to breathe, eat, or drink. However, the seriousness of pertussis goes beyond coughing, it can also cause pneumonia, seizures, and permanent brain damage. Most adults and teens can recover from whooping cough but may experience several weeks of severe coughing. Pertussis can be deadly for infants less than one year old. Teenagers and adults should be vaccinated and adults over 65 years old who may have close contact with babies should be vaccinated.

Tdap vaccinations will be available at no cost at the following community clinics to people over age 11:

- ELIM Christian Fellowship Church, 525 East 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
Sunday, May 19, 2013 after 8:00 & 10:30 AM Services.

- The Polk County Health Department's booth at Juneteenth at Evelyn Davis Park
Saturday, June 15, 2013

Tdap vaccinations are also available at your health care provider. Vaccinations are available at the Polk County Health Department to people of all ages. Some may qualify for free vaccinations. Bring your insurance card and immunization records. Call for an appointment Mon-Fri from 8-5 and until 7:00 on Tuesdays, 286-3798.