

Give 'Em Your **Best Shot**



Georgia Immunization Requirements for Child Care and School Attendance Information for Parents

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Georgia Requirements

Your child needs to be up-to-date on immunizations to enter school or attend child care. Vaccines help keep him and his friends well, and it's the law in Georgia.

Georgia law requires that all children who attend child care and enter school be protected against these diseases: diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Hib, measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, tetanus, varicella (chickenpox), polio, and pneumococcal disease.

Your child's doctor or clinic can answer any questions you might have about vaccines and the schedule.

Georgia requirements are based on the schedule recommended by doctors and scientists: the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians. There are other shots you may also want your child to have, and scientists are working to find new vaccines to protect against even more diseases. And remember that your child may continue to need boosters such as tetanus and pertussis.

A Parent's Responsibility

Protect Your Child from Disease

- Be sure to make those well checkup appointments during your child's early years.
- At each visit, check to see if your child's immunizations are up-to-date.
- If he gets behind, ask your doctor to help him catch up.
- Keep your own complete record of your child's shots. This is very important in case you move or change health-care providers. **Ask your doctor or clinic for an immunization record and take it to each visit to be updated.**

Age Requirements

Younger than 4: New Shots, New Certificate, New Expiration Date

Babies and children who attend child care must show proof that their shots are up-to-date for their age. Since children are scheduled for shots at many of the well checkups during their early years, you will need to **get a new immunization certificate each time your child gets new shots.**

The doctor will mark a new “Date of Expiration” on each new certificate — that’s the date your child is due for another shot. A child whose certificate has not been replaced within 30 days after the “Date of Expiration” is not allowed to attend school or child care in Georgia.

Be sure to take this new certificate to your child’s school or child care.

4 or Older: X Marks the Spot

When children are four to six years old, most will complete the shot schedule they need to enter school and protect them from serious diseases.

When your child reaches this milestone, the doctor will mark an “X” in the “Complete for School Attendance” box on the certificate. This certificate with the “X” mark does not expire and is the last one the child will need for school.

Children registering for school at age five years or older must have proof of immunization against all the diseases listed on the back of this brochure except Hib and pneumococcal disease.

Catching up

If a child’s record does not meet the requirements, he may attend child care or school while he is catching up. Your doctor or clinic will mark a new expiration date on the form 3231 each time he gets a new shot until all requirements are met.

The number of doses a child receives depends on the age when he enters school and when he started getting his shots.



The number of shots — and the dates on the form — are different depending on your child’s age.

Remember:

Vaccines Are Our Best Shot to Keep Georgia Children Healthy.

Protecting your child from disease may be the most important thing you can do for his health. Immunizations help keep children **safe from diseases** that once struck routinely.

Vaccines have done a great job getting rid of these diseases or making them very rare.

So most Georgia parents have never known the fears of earlier generations. Before vaccines, almost every parent could expect his or her child to get some of the illnesses listed on the back of this brochure. Hundreds — sometimes thousands — of people died each year from them. Today, vaccines and immunization requirements protect most Georgia children from these deadly illnesses. Talk with your child's doctor or healthcare provider about other vaccines that are recommended but not required for child care and school attendance.



Vaccine Requirements Protect Your Child from These Diseases

Diphtheria is a bacterium that causes a throat infection so bad a patient can't swallow or breathe. It can make a poison in the body that can cause heart failure or paralysis. The "D" part of the **DTaP, Tdap** or **Td vaccines** protect against it.

Hepatitis Types A and B are viruses that can cause liver damage. Many people who get these illnesses can infect others. Some people who get Hepatitis B become lifelong carriers.

Hib (*Haemophilus influenzae* type b) is a bacterium that causes meningitis, a swelling of the brain covering. It can also cause very bad throat or joint infections, pneumonia and hearing loss. **Hib vaccine** has been very successful in preventing this disease in young children.

Measles is a very contagious virus that causes a high fever and rash. It can lead to ear infections, pneumonia or swelling in the brain. The first "M" in the **MMR vaccine** protects against measles.

Mumps causes painful swelling around the cheeks and jaw. The virus can result in hearing loss or meningitis. The second "M" in the **MMR vaccine** protects children from mumps.

Pertussis (whooping cough) causes coughing spells so violent that a child can't breathe, eat or drink. Infection with this bacteria can lead to pneumonia, seizures or even a coma. The "P" part of the **DTaP** or **Tdap vaccines** protect against whooping cough.

Pneumococcal disease can lead to serious infections of the lungs (pneumonia), the blood (bacteremia), and the covering of the brain (meningitis). **Pneumococcal vaccine** protects against this disease.

Polio is a virus that can paralyze people, make their muscles weak or cause them to need a machine to help them breathe. **IPV** or **OPV vaccines** protect against the disease.

Rubella (German Measles) can harm unborn babies early in pregnancy. The "R" in the **MMR** vaccine protects against rubella.

Tetanus (lockjaw) causes muscle spasms so bad they can break bones. The bacteria get into the body through a wound. The "T" in **DTaP, Tdap** or **Td vaccines** protect children. Everyone needs a tetanus booster every 10 years.

Varicella Zoster (chickenpox) is a virus that causes itching and blisters. It can be severe in some people and can lead to pneumonia or skin infections.



Georgia Chapter
American
Academy of
Pediatrics



Georgia Academy of
Family Physicians