

County of Santa Clara

Public Health Department

Health Officer
976 Lenzen Avenue, 2nd Floor
San José, CA 95126
408.792.5040



July 23, 2020

Re: Childhood Vaccinations and Wellness Care for the Upcoming School Year

Dear Parent and/or Guardian:

As we approach the start of the 2020-2021 school year, staying up to date with childhood vaccinations and general wellness care are as important as ever. There continues to be uncertainty around the exact date that schools will resume in-person instruction, but the prevalence of COVID-19 in our community can change dramatically in a relatively short period of time. Families should begin preparing for the school year now. Vaccinations are required for school admission and they are also crucial to prevent children from getting sick outside of school settings.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Vaccinations will prevent an estimated 21 million hospitalizations and 732,000 deaths among children born in the last 20 years.
- There were several outbreaks of measles and whooping cough in recent years. These diseases are extremely contagious and can be very serious, especially for babies and young children. Over 25% of children younger than five years old who had measles had to be hospitalized for conditions that can lead to pneumonia, brain damage, deafness, and death.
- However, during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, childhood vaccinations plummeted. From mid-March to mid-April, doctors ordered about 2.5 million fewer doses of routine flu shots and 250,000 fewer doses of measles-containing vaccines than the same time period in 2019.

While the new school year will look different than in past years, some things will stay the same.

- Immunization requirements for admission to school or childcare in California for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year remain in place. Visit <https://www.shotsforschool.org/> to review the required vaccinations, and then schedule an appointment with your health care provider for a well-child visit and to review your child's immunization record.
- Many dentists have resumed dental care services. If your child has not been to the dentist in the past year, contact your dentist to schedule an appointment as soon as possible to avoid untreated cavities or infections that may impact their success at school.
- Many children and families have social and emotional needs associated with the closure of schools, summer programming and other needed resources. Check in with your child. If you need assistance, call the California Parent and Youth Helpline for resources and referrals that support parent and youth during the current COVID-19 pandemic. They are available seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Call or text 1-855-4-A-PARENT (855-427-2736) for

services in English, Spanish and other languages. For more information, please visit: <https://caparentyouthhelpline.org/>.

During this pandemic, routine health care and vaccination of children are critical to protecting our children's health and wellbeing. Let's work together to ensure that all students, whether studying in-person or virtually, are healthy and ready to learn.

Sincerely,



Sara H. Cody, M.D.
Health Officer and Director
Public Health Department
County of Santa Clara



Mary Ann Dewan, Ph.D.
County Superintendent of Schools
Santa Clara County