



# Give 'Em Your Best Shot

*Georgia Immunization Requirements for Childcare  
and School Attendance Information for Parents*

**Immunize**  
Georgia





## 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 their 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. Most Georgia parents have never known the fears of earlier generations. Today, vaccines and immunization requirements protect Georgia children from these deadly illnesses. Talk with your child's doctor or healthcare provider about other vaccines that are recommended to protect your child and keep them healthy.

## Georgia Requirements

Your child needs to be up-to-date on immunizations to enter school or attend childcare. Georgia law requires that all children who attend childcare and enter school be protected against the following diseases: diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib), measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, tetanus, varicella (chickenpox), polio, pneumococcal, and meningococcal disease.

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 that are not required for school attendance but are highly recommended by doctors for all children.

## A Parent's Responsibility Protect Your Child from Disease

- ▶ **Schedule** regular checkups as recommended by your child's healthcare provider
- ▶ **Ask** your **child's healthcare provider** about the vaccines your child needs
- ▶ **Obtain** a new Georgia Certificate of Immunization (form 3231) every time your child has a shot
- ▶ **Give** a copy of the Georgia Certificate of Immunization (form 3231) to your childcare provider or school

## Vaccine Requirements Protect Your Child from These Diseases

<b>Diphtheria</b>	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.
<b>Hepatitis Types A and B</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. The Hepatitis A and B vaccines protect against these diseases.
<b>Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b)</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. The Hib vaccine has been very successful in preventing this disease in young children.
<b>Measles</b>	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.
<b>Mumps</b>	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.
<b>Meningococcal disease (meningitis)</b>	is a bacterial infection that can make the lining of the brain and spinal cord swell. The meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) protects against 4 types of meningococcal disease, an infection that doesn't happen very often, but can be very dangerous when it does.
<b>Pertussis (whooping cough)</b>	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 whooping cough, DTaP or Tdap vaccines protect against it.
<b>Pneumococcal disease</b>	can lead to serious infections of the lungs (pneumonia), the blood (bacteremia), and the covering of the brain (meningitis). The pneumococcal vaccine protects against this disease.
<b>Polio</b>	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 this disease.
<b>Rubella (German Measles)</b>	can harm unborn babies early in pregnancy. The "R" in the MMR vaccine protects against rubella.
<b>Tetanus (lockjaw)</b>	causes muscle spasms so bad they can break bones. The bacteria gets into the body through a wound. The "T" in DTaP, Tdap or Td vaccines protect children against it; however, everyone needs a tetanus booster every 10 years.
<b>Varicella Zoster (chickenpox)</b>	is a virus that causes itching and blisters. It can be severe in some people and can lead to pneumonia or skin infections. The varicella vaccine protects against this disease.

### Required Form for Childcare and School Attendance Georgia Registry of Immunization Transactions and Services

The **Georgia Certificate of Immunization (form 3231)** is required for childcare and school attendance. The certificate must be certified by a licensed Georgia doctor, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN), Physician Assistant (PA), a county board of health department official, or the State Immunization Program.

Each facility your child attends should have a copy of the certificate on file. A photocopy is OK. For instance, if your second grader goes to an after-school program at a private childcare center, the school may have the original and the childcare facility a photocopy.

### Georgia Registry of Immunization Transactions and Services

**GRITS** is a "birth-to-death" web-based registry that keeps track of immunizations and related information for Georgians of all ages (i.e., children, adolescents, and adults). The GRITS system includes a comprehensive database of immunization histories to help children get the immunizations they need by keeping track of all vaccines they have received. Childcare and school administrators have access to GRITS and can print up-to-date immunization certificates.

## Immunization Requirements

### 4 Years and Younger:

Children enrolled in childcare must show proof that their shots are up-to-date for their age. Since children are scheduled for shots at many of their regular checkups, **they will need a new immunization certificate each time they get a new shot.**

Each new certificate will be marked with a new "Date of Expiration" – that's the date the child will be due for another shot. If the certificate is not replaced within 30 days after the "Date of Expiration" the child will not be allowed to attend childcare or school until the certificate is renewed. **Be sure to take the new certificate to your child's childcare or school.**

### Kindergarten through 6th Grade:

Children 4 years and older attending kindergarten through 6th grade must be up-to-date on the following shots based on their age: Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough), Polio, Pneumococcal (pneumonia), Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib), MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), and Varicella (chickenpox). When your child reaches this milestone, the doctor will mark an "X" in the "Complete for K through 6th Grade" box of the certificate. This certificate with the "X" mark will indicate the child has met all requirements for K-6th grade and their next required immunization will be due on the date of expiration.

### 7th Grade through 10th Grade:

Children attending 7th grade or entering school for the first time in 8th through 10th grade are required to have proof of an adolescent pertussis (whooping cough) booster vaccination, an adolescent meningococcal conjugate vaccination, and all shots required for K-6th grade. When your child reaches this milestone, the doctor will mark an "X" in the "Complete For 7th Grade through 10th Grade" box of the certificate. This certificate with the "X" mark will indicate the child has met all requirements 7th through 10th grade and their next required immunization will be due on the date of expiration.

### 11th Grade and Higher:

Children sixteen years of age and older enrolled in the 11th grade or children entering school for the first time in 11th or 12th grade must show proof of a booster dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine, unless their initial dose was administered on or after their sixteenth birthday. When your child reaches this milestone, the doctor will mark an "X" in the "Complete For 11th Grade and Higher" box of the certificate. This certificate will indicate the child has met all grade level entry requirements for school attendance and no additional shots are required.

### Catching up

If a child's record does not meet all requirements at the time of first entry, the child may attend childcare or school while catching up. Your doctor or clinic will mark a new expiration date on the immunization certificate (form 3231) each time a new shot is administered until all requirements are met. The number of doses a child receives depends on their age when they first enter school and when they started getting shots.





## Georgia Department of Public Health Immunization Program

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