



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Childhood vaccines are safe and important

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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One of the most important things parents can do to help protect their children's health, the health of their classmates, and their community is to ensure their children receive all recommended vaccines on time. In addition, Alabama state law requires all children to present an up-to-date Certificate of Immunization (COI) upon entrance to childcare centers and school.

"Incorrect information concerning adverse effects of vaccines continues to circulate on social media, in print and in film," Dr. Karen Landers, pediatrician and medical consultant for the Alabama Department of Public Health Immunization Division, said. "Physicians, especially pediatricians, are strong proponents of vaccination to reduce disease and death in children. The American Academy of Pediatrics urges parents and caregivers to consult their physicians regarding questions about childhood vaccine safety."

Parents are the key in protecting their children from serious and potentially life-threatening diseases by ensuring their children are vaccinated according to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices Schedule. For example in Alabama in the past 12 months, there were 174 pertussis or whooping cough cases. Many of these cases could have been prevented with vaccines given on schedule.

When children are not vaccinated, they are at risk of disease and can spread diseases to others in their classrooms and community. Communities with groups of unvaccinated people are vulnerable to preventable diseases. Vaccine protects the people who received the vaccine, as well as children too young to be vaccinated, persons with medical conditions preventing vaccination, and those who do not respond to the vaccine.

- Vaccines recommended for early childhood include diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, varicella, measles, mumps, rubella, polio, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, pneumococcal disease, hepatitis A, hepatitis B and rotavirus.

- Children entering school need booster doses of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, varicella, measles, mumps, rubella and polio vaccines.
- Preteens and teenagers need tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, human papillomavirus and meningococcal conjugate vaccines.
- All children 6 months and older are recommended to receive annual influenza vaccines.

Parents can find out more about the immunizations children need at adph.org/immunization.

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