



Immunization Guide for Louisiana Daycares and Early Learning Centers

2022-2023

Louisiana Immunization Program – Office of Public Health

1450 POYDRAS STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LA
70112

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OVERVIEW

The 2022-2023 Immunization Guide for Louisiana Daycares and Early Learning Centers provides base-level information to facility staff members tasked with completing vaccination compliance work at their respective facility sites. Facility staff perform immunization-related activities that include the processing of child immunization records and exceptions, updating immunization reports through the Louisiana Immunization Network (LINKS) childcare module, and answering questions coming from parents and guardians regarding the vaccinations required for daycare and early learning center entry and attendance.

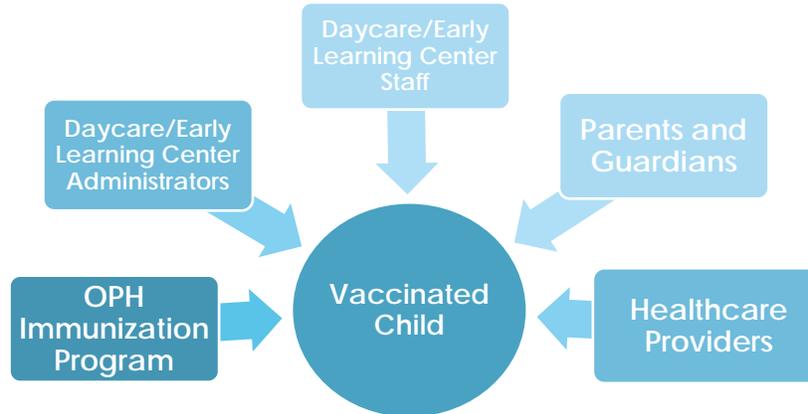
This manual will assist staff in performing the following tasks:

- **Communicating** with parents, facility administrators, and healthcare providers regarding state immunization requirements for children attending daycare/early learning centers.
- **Assessing** the vaccinations a student needs for school entry by Louisiana law.
- **Preparing and updating** the required annual daycare/early learning immunization reports by the annual due date.
- **Reporting** communicable diseases at your school.
- **Working** with public health officials to get susceptible children immunized during disease outbreaks.
- **Understanding** the causes and symptoms of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs), and how they are spread.
- **Navigating** the childcare module within LINKS.
- **Locating** available immunization resources and trainings.



STAKEHOLDER ROLES

Key Stakeholders in Childhood Immunization



Many entities have important roles in the vaccination of Louisiana’s children and with the maintenance of vaccination records. Below is some additional background on the roles that these immunization partners play.

DAYCARE/EARLY LEARNING CENTER STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS



According to Louisiana Revised Statute 17:170, Chief Administrators of all elementary and secondary schools, kindergartens, colleges, universities, proprietary schools, vocational schools, and licensed daycare centers, whether public or private within state, shall be responsible for checking records and enforcing immunization compliance. Chief administrators, by law, are to exclude children from daycare/early learning centers if they do not meet the State of Louisiana’s immunization requirements. Complete Louisiana Revised Statute regarding childhood immunization requirements can be found on the Louisiana State Legislature’s [webpage](#).

Administrators may designate other staff to perform immunization compliance tasks, such as nurses, health assistants, secretaries, and clerks. Facilities should have and follow policies to protect confidential information such as immunization records.

The following immunization compliance tasks are the responsibility of daycare facilities and early learning centers:

- Review State of Louisiana Certificates of Immunizations to ensure the records are correct and complete.
- Maintain a filing system for the required Certificates of Immunizations, such as alphabetizing by age level, name, or other system to make it easier to keep the records up to date.
- Identify children who are missing required immunizations and contact parents/guardians for follow-up.
- Exclude children who do not meet the immunization requirements for entry into daycares and early learning centers in Louisiana.
- Identify and retain records of disease susceptible children (those with an exemption or missing doses) to use in the event of a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak.
- Update rosters in LINKS childcare module for required data reporting to the Louisiana Immunization Program as required by law.
- Teach parents and other staff members about the importance of getting children vaccinated.
- Follow state immunization laws and daycare/early learning center requirements.

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Louisiana Department of Education provides guidance to Louisiana schools regarding immunization requirements and managing vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks. The Department also establishes rules and regulations regarding immunization requirements, managing school exclusions, and updates/monitors the official Louisiana Certification of Exemption [form](#). There is no requirement for the document to be notarized, and all requests are granted.



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The Office of Public Health Immunization Program:

- Collects and assesses school and early childcare immunization data as part of a federal requirement to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Regional Immunization Program staff:

- Provides assistance and support to facilities, answers questions regarding immunization requirements, and are a resource on vaccines and vaccine preventable diseases.
- Maintains the LINKS system, which is the secure online immunization registry used to update immunization records.
- Reviews submitted records to ensure they comply with state requirements.



The Program works closely with other partners including:

- Department of Education
- State Board of Health
- Regional Office of Public Health
- Parish Health Units
- Healthcare Providers
- School Nurses and Staff
- School Districts and Superintendents

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Healthcare providers are encouraged to immunize patients according to the most current CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended immunization schedules.

Healthcare providers:

- Educate parents/guardians about vaccine preventable diseases and vaccinations and provide a current Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) for each vaccine administered.
- Give information on the benefits and risks of immunization to parents/guardians wanting to exempt (excuse) their child from immunization requirements.
- Healthcare providers licensed in Louisiana, including physicians (M.D.), physician assistants (P.A.), osteopaths (D.O.), naturopaths (N.D.), and advanced registered nurse practitioners (A.R.N.P.), can either sign the official Certificate of Exemption or write and sign a letter with the same information.



- Must provide parents/guardians, when requested, a written record of immunizations administered. Providers with access can print and sign the Certificate of Immunizations if the certificate is up-to-date and not expired, with the child’s immunization history prepopulated by LINKS.

The HIPAA privacy rule permits providers to disclose proof of required immunizations to a facility with agreement from the parent or guardian. The agreement can be obtained either orally or in writing. It does not require signature or other formal elements of HIPAA authorization. More information on HIPAA privacy rules and childhood immunizations can be found on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [webpage](#).

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The parent/guardian is responsible for:

- Ensuring their child meets all facility immunization requirements.
- Keeping accurate and up-to-date vaccination records for their children.
- Submitting a complete Certificate of Immunizations to their child’s daycare/early learning center before the child enrolls and attends, per Louisiana Revised Statute 17:170. A signed immunization exemption form can be provided by parents/guardians in lieu of the receipt of a complete Certificate of Immunizations form.



VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

Daycare/early learning center staff can help to protect children against serious diseases by encouraging complete and timely immunization. Staff can help educate parents and guardians regarding:

- Keeping up-to-date immunization records in a safe space and on file with the facility.
- Vaccinating children on time and with recommended vaccination schedule.
- The Louisiana Vaccines for Children (VFC) program which can provide no cost vaccination if they meet program requirements.
- Vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks are still occurring throughout the country and in Louisiana.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IMMUNIZATION “REQUIRED” AND “RECOMMENDED”

The difference between immunization requirements and recommendations often confuse many childhood and early education providers. The following definitions can assist childhood/early education staff, as well as the parents they serve:

- **Requirements:** Children are required by state law to get certain vaccines to enter into and attend daycare/early learning centers.
- **Recommendations:** The Louisiana Office of Public Health updates a recommended schedule for immunization of children on a yearly basis. The CDC’s ACIP also makes vaccine recommendations that providers follow as “best practice” to get the best protection from vaccine preventable diseases. Not all vaccines recommended by the ACIP are required/recommended in the state of Louisiana.

Immunization School Entry Requirements:

Louisiana Daycare/Early Learning Center Immunization Entry Requirements ¹	
Vaccine Type	Requirement
Diphtheria Tetanus Acellular Pertussis vaccine (DTaP)	Child must be up-to-date on vaccinations for their age according to a valid State of Louisiana Universal Certificate of Immunizations.
Poliovirus vaccine (IPV)	
Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccine (MMR)	
Hepatitis B vaccine (HepB)	
Varicella vaccine (VAR)	

¹ Requirements are in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statute 17:170 and Louisiana Administrative Code, Title 51, Section I-701.

Note: Children may participate without the required immunizations listed above if either of the following are presented: 1) a written statement from a physician stating that the procedure is contraindicated for medical reasons; or 2) written dissent from the parent or guardian.

The daycare/early learning center immunization requirements are also available [online](#) at the Louisiana Department of Health Immunization Program.

STUDENT IMMUNIZATION STATUS TERMINOLOGY

The following terms describe the immunization status of children attending daycare/early learning centers in Louisiana:



- **Complete**
- **Out of Compliance**
- **Exempt**

A short definition of each term is provided below:

- Child has an immunization status of **COMPLETE** if they:
 - Have been fully vaccinated for their age according to vaccination requirements set by the state, or
 - Have provided proof of acquired immunity
- Child has an immunization status of **OUT OF COMPLIANCE** if they:
 - Are not fully immunized for their age according to the state entry requirements, or
 - Do not have an exemption for the missing required immunization on file.

¹ Requirements are in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statute 17:170 and Louisiana Administrative Code, Title 51, Section I-701.

Note: Children may participate without the required immunizations listed above if either of the following are presented: 1) a written statement from a physician stating that the procedure is contraindicated for medical reasons; or 2) written dissent from the parent or guardian.

Any child with **OUT OF COMPLIANCE** status must, by law (RS 17:170), be excluded from attending daycare/early learning centers until he or she meets the legal requirements of the law. Chief Administrators are empowered and have the duty to exclude children from attending who are not in compliance with vaccination requirements.

Daycare/early learning center staff should consult with their administrator to ensure that exclusion is in accordance with the procedures set by the Department of Education.

- Students have an immunization status of **EXEMPT** if they:
 - Have a vaccination exemption on file for one or more required vaccinations. The individual, or their parent or guardian, may submit a written statement from a physician stating that the procedure is contraindicated for medical reasons. The individual may also submit a written dissent on behalf of themselves, or the dissent can come from their parent/guardian. The dissent can also be for religious or philosophical reasons.

The Louisiana Immunization Program recommends that signed exemption forms be resubmitted annually if a parent/guardian, or individual, wishes to claim an immunization exemption over multiple years. The Louisiana Department of Education’s Statement of exemption form can be found [here](#).

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

LOUISIANA UNIVERSAL CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATIONS

A parent/guardian must provide proof of required vaccinations or acquired immunity before a child can attend any daycare/early learning center in Louisiana. Facility staff shall require a valid State of Louisiana’s Universal Certificate of Immunizations form from the parent/guardian. The certificate must be current and verified by checking the expiration date at the top right of the page. An expired certificate is considered invalid and means that immunizations are not up-to-date. These records shall be maintained at the site where the child is attending. It is important that these records are consistent and complete to allow the facility staff to quickly determine the immunization status of enrolled populations, which is especially important in the event of a disease outbreak.

An authorized (signed) **CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATIONS** can include:

- Certificate printed from LINKS and signed by a vaccination provider, or printed from LINKS by daycare/early learning center and signed by a provider; or
- Certificate printed from Louisiana MyIR by an individual or parent/guardian. MyIR registration can be found [here](#). Also for more information, see the LINKS section of this guide.

Do not accept any unapproved or alternate certificate. A certificate must include:

- Name and birth date of child
- Type of vaccinations received
- Month, day, and year of each dose of vaccine received
- Authorized signature (either from a vaccination provider, authorized facility staff member, or the MyIR system)

A complete certificate must be signed and on file at each facility site. Staff must immediately follow-up with the parent or guardian if the certificate is not signed, dated, or not filled out completely. Every daycare, preschool, and early learning center must review the vaccinations listed on the certificate and determine a child’s immunization status as complete, out of compliance, or exempt.

HOW PARENTS CAN GET HELP

Louisiana requires parents/guardians to submit a completed, signed and dated immunization record to meet the state's immunization requirements for entry into daycares, preschools, or early learning centers. Parents/guardians can get help in these ways:

- Ask if the healthcare provider can print a Certificate of Immunizations directly from the LINKS system.
- Sign up with MyIR which allows them to view their own and their children's immunizations online and print a pre-populated Certificate of Immunizations. (See LINKS section of this guide for more information on this).
- Contact your local Parish Health Unit for assistance. Local Parish Health Unit information can be found [here](#).

*Please note: Attaching a record of immunization history to the **UNIVERSAL CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATIONS** with a parent signature, is unacceptable. The certificate itself should be fully completed with dates of vaccination represented with signature from an authorized entity, and then submitted to the daycare/early learning center.*

ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS



Daycares/early learning centers are required by state statute to report enrolled child vaccination information electronically to the Louisiana Immunization Program. Each year the program works with facilities throughout the state to ensure reports are updated in the LINKS childcare module by set deadlines.

The Program collects the aggregate data within the LINKS childcare module and performs special assessments on the data. Aggregate state-level data may be sent to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) if requested.

The Immunization Program analyzes the collected data and can develop parish-level and facility-level data maps and graphs so that the program, daycares/early learning centers, and parents can assess the following:

- Percent of children with complete vaccination records in each parish/at each facility.
- Percent of children with missing vaccination records and incomplete vaccination records in each parish/at each facility. (Note: These are the children considered "Out of Compliance" and should be excluded from attending until records are complete).
- Percent of children with an exemption on file in each parish/at each facility.
- Number of facilities that did not report data as required (statewide).

LOUISIANA REPORTING LAWS FOR DAYCARES (RS 17:170)

(1) Chief administrators of all elementary and secondary schools, kindergartens, colleges and universities, proprietary schools, vocational schools, and licensed daycare centers whether public or private within this state shall:

Be responsible for checking each child's record to see that the provisions of this section are enforced.

Electronically transmit immunization compliance reports to the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Public Health, when the facility operates an existing child-specific electronic data system.

(2) The provisions of this section which relate to the electronic transmission of data shall be implemented according to rules and regulations promulgated by the Louisiana Department of Health in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

REPORTING STUDENT IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION DEADLINE

The deadline for reporting child immunization data is **October 1**, each year.

HOW TO SUBMIT REPORTS

Reporting of enrolled child vaccination information to the Louisiana Department of Health, as required by state statute, occurs at the facility level. Responsible staff members must update rosters within the childcare module within LINKS by the reporting deadline. If needed, please contact the Regional Immunization Consultant in your area who will provide guidance on enrollment in LINKS and trainings that provide instructions on using the LINKS childcare [module](#). New users must register to review the trainings. Regional contact information is maintained on the [LINKS](#) homepage. Use the information below to contact the appropriate consultant in your area.

REGIONAL IMMUNIZATION CONSULTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Region 1: Amanda Melancon, 504-599-0128, Amanda.Melancon@la.gov

Region 2: Cindy Aydell, 225-342-2046, Cindy.Aydell@la.gov

Region 3: Laurie Lapeyrouse, 985-447-0916 Ext. 350, Laurie.Lapeyrouse@la.gov

Region 4: Allen Franks, 337-262-5620, Allen.Franks@la.gov

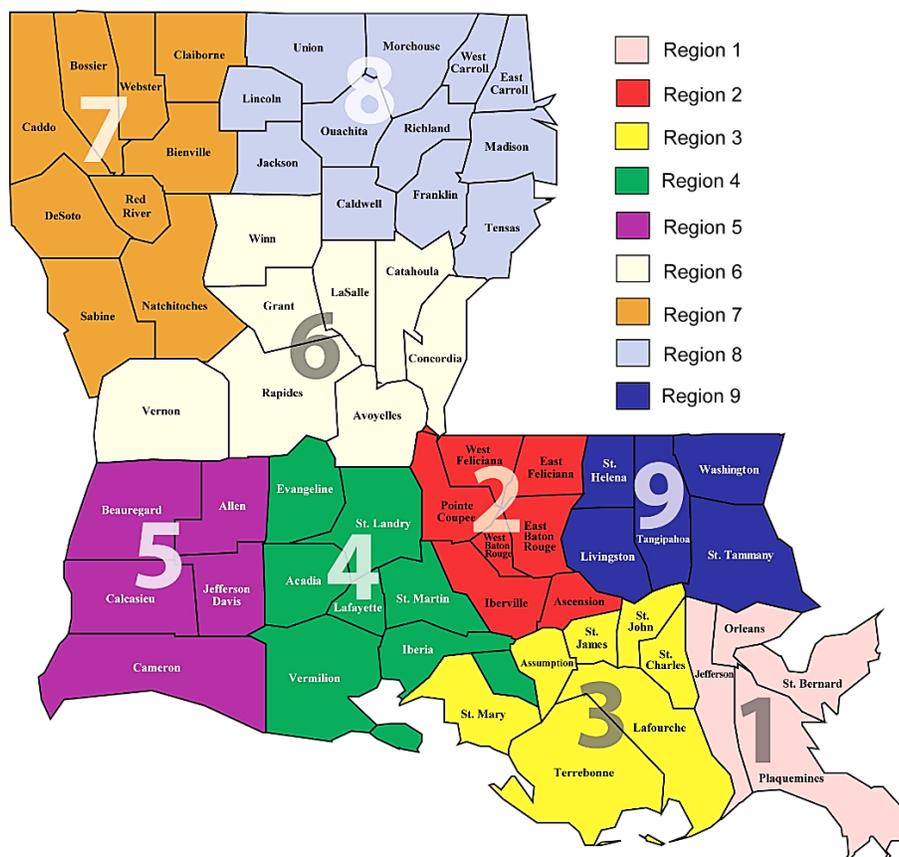
Region 5: Shonna McCarthy-Lewis, 337-475-3245, Shonna.McCarthy-Lewis@la.gov

Region 6: Lavillian Jordan, 318-487-5264, Lavillian.Jordan@la.gov

Region 7: Tara Black, 318-676-7926, Tara.Black@la.gov

Region 8: E. Joy Jordan, 318-361-7217, Joy.Jordan@la.gov

Region 9: vacant



LINKS – LOUISIANA IMMUNIZATION NETWORK

LINKS is the Louisiana Immunization Network Information System. LINKS keeps track of immunization records for people of all ages and forecasts recommended vaccinations based on an individual's age. The system is a secure, web-based tool for vaccination providers as well as schools. LINKS connects people who receive, administer, record, view, report on, and order vaccines in Louisiana.

CHILDCARE MODULE

The childcare module is the portal within LINKS that daycares/early learning centers must use for vaccination tracking and reporting according to Louisiana law. Staff use it to access existing immunization records for enrolled children. The childcare module allows the user to see facility-specific information and reports. It provides tools to quickly and accurately determine immunization compliance and identify vulnerable children during a disease outbreak. There are many more reasons why the childcare module is beneficial for facilities and public health. For more information, contact your Regional Immunization Consultant (see page 11 for listing of contacts).

LINKS homepage: [LINKS-Web Main Page \(lalinks.org\)](https://lalinks.org)

PATIENT PRIVACY

LINKS follows state and federal laws that govern the use and sharing of health information. The data provided from daycares/early learning centers, through LINKS, is in aggregate format and is not considered patient specific data.

ACCESSING THE IIS

Staff whose job responsibilities include child immunization tracking and reporting are authorized to become system users. Facilities can access the system in two different ways:

- **View access:** allows schools to view immunization records, and print **UNIVERSAL CERTIFICATES OF IMMUNIZATIONS**.
- **Child Module access:** allows facilities to view an enrolled child's immunization record. This module provides tools to help track compliance with immunization requirements.

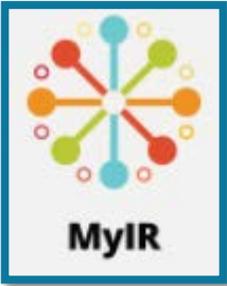
To access LINKS, visit <https://lalinks.org/linksweb/>. *Please note: Your school site must be enrolled in LINKS to access (see REQUESTING ACCESS TO LINKS section)*

STEPS TO ENROLLMENT

In order to complete the enrollment process to gain access as a user in LINKS you must do the following:

1. Contact your Regional Consultant to request LINKS access. (See the **REGIONAL IMMUNIZATION CONSULTANT** section)
2. Complete the **LINKS SITE ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT** and send the completed form electronically to the Regional Immunization Consultant serving your area of the state. The form can be found in the [LINKS Documents Center](#)
3. Complete the **LINKS INDIVIDUAL USER AGREEMENT** and send the completed form electronically to the Regional Immunization consultant serving your area of the state. This form can also be found in the [LINKS Documents Center](#).
4. Review the **LINKS CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY** in the [LINKS Documents Center](#).
5. Complete the required LINKS online trainings that will be assigned to you by the Regional Immunization Consultant in your area. LINKS trainings can also be completed by registering to the [LINKS Training Program](#).

LOUISIANA MYIR



MyIR is a consumer access portal that parents/guardians and other individuals can use to view their own and their family's immunization records securely online. Once registered for MyIR, consumers can access their immunization records at any time. They can also print the **CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATIONS** for daycare/early learning center entry purposes.

Signing up for MyIR is easy. Individuals or parent/guardians go to [Louisiana Sign in - MyIR Mobile](#) to create an account and login.

DISEASE REPORTING AND OUTBREAKS

REPORTING OF DISEASE

Facilities are required to notify public health authorities at their local health jurisdiction of suspected or confirmed cases of selected diseases or conditions. The list of reportable diseases per state sanitary code can be found at the [Louisiana Department of Health Office of Community & Preventive Health](#).



Reporters shall utilize the [EPI-2430 card](#) for purposes of Confidential Diseases Case Report.

Completed EPI-2430 cards can be submitted by fax, 504-568-8290, or mail to the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section, Louisiana Department of Health Department of Health, Office of Public Health, 1450 Poydras Street Suite 1641, New Orleans, LA 70112.

All facsimile transmissions are considered part of the confidential disease case report, and as such, not subject to disclosure. Make additional copies as needed. Your support in disease reporting will enhance disease prevention.

DISEASE OUTBREAKS

Any unusual or group expression of illness which may be of public health concern should be reported to the local health authorities by the most expeditious means, whether it is included or not in the list of diseases officially reportable in the particular locality and whether it is a well-known identifiable disease or an undefined or unknown clinical entity.

If you notice any unusually large number of persons becoming ill with the same illness (whether or not they seem to be related in other ways), the Louisiana Department of Health encourages you to report a possible outbreak to public health at 504-568-8313 during business hours, or 800-256-2748 after hours. Any occurrence of a rare or exotic illness should also be reported.

According to Louisiana Revised Statute 17:170, in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease at the location of an educational institution or licensed daycare center, the administrators of that institution or facility are empowered, upon the recommendation of the Office of Public Health, to exclude from attendance unimmunized children and clients until the appropriate disease incubation period has expired or the unimmunized person presents evidence of immunization.

STAFF VACCINATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Daycares/early learning centers must try to prevent the spread of disease for both children and staff. To do this, they should:

- Keep track of staff vaccinations or remind staff that they may need to provide their immunization records in the event of an outbreak.
- Promote vaccination for staff members in an effort to safeguard the daycare/early learning center community.
- If directed by the local Health Officer, exclude susceptible staff members during an outbreak (refer to your facility or agency policies about whether staff can take sick leave when excluded).

The following immunizations are recommended for facility staff:

Recommended Immunizations for Teachers and School Staff		
Vaccine	Persons Born Before 1957	Persons Born in or After 1957
MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)	<p>2 doses of vaccine recommended for healthcare personnel (including school nurses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not at high risk: generally considered immune (US or foreign born). Vaccine not routinely recommended, but 1 dose may be given • Testing is NOT necessary. However, if testing occurred and result is negative, 1 or 2 doses of MMR vaccine is recommended, depending on risk level 	<p>1 dose of vaccine if not at high risk</p> <p>2 doses of vaccine if high risk (healthcare personnel, including school nurses, international travelers, and students attending college)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaccine needed even with history of prior disease diagnosed by a provider • No vaccine needed if documentation of blood test shows positive immunity • No vaccination or testing needed if documentation of 1-2 doses of MMR vaccine (number of doses depends on risk level)
Varicella (chickenpox)	<p>2 doses of vaccine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other evidence of immunity: no vaccine needed • Healthcare provider verification of chickenpox disease or herpes zoster (shingles) • Persons born before 1980 (does NOT apply to healthcare personnel, pregnant women, and immunosuppressed persons) • Blood test showing positive immunity 	
Hepatitis B	<p>2 or 3 doses depending on which vaccine is used</p>	
Tdap/Td	<p>1 dose of Tdap, then Td booster every 10 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnant women should get Tdap during EACH pregnancy, regardless when the last dose was received 	
Influenza (Flu)	<p>Annual influenza vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older</p>	

For information on additional general recommended vaccinations for adults, go to: <http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3670>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Resource	Website
Fight the Flu Louisiana	http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/subhome/8
Foreign Language Terms: Aids to translating foreign immunization records	www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/downloads/appendices/B/foreign-products-tables.pdf
Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html
School Testing for COVID-19	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/school-testing.html
Toolkit for K-12 Schools	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/toolkits/schools.html
Immunization Action Coalition – Ask the Experts	http://www.immunize.org/askexperts/
Immunization Action Coalition – Vaccine Basics FAQs	https://www.immunize.org/faq/
LINKS	https://lalinks.org/linksweb/
List of Reportable Diseases in Louisiana (Sanitary Code)	https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/1013
Louisiana’s Immunization-Related Laws	http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3673
Pink Book: Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases	www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/index.html
Requirements for attending schools of higher learning	http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3653
School Located Influenza Vaccination Clinics	https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3543
Statewide school immunization report data	https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/4250
Vaccination Schedule: Louisiana (ages 0-18)	https://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-PHCH/Center-PH/immunizations/2022-23/IMMUNIZATION_SCHEDULE_AND_ENTRY_REQUIREMENTS.pdf
Vaccination Schedule: CDC (ages 0-18)	https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/child/0-18yrs-child-combined-schedule.pdf
Vaccine Abbreviations and Trade Names	https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/committee/guidance/vac-abbrev.html
Vaccine Acronyms and Abbreviations - General	https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/terms/acronyms.html
Louisiana School Immunization Entry Requirements	https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3652
Vaccine Terms in Multiple Languages	www.immunize.org/catg.d/p5122.pdf
Where kids can get vaccinated in Louisiana	http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3640