

Frequently Asked Questions about Tdap

What is the Tdap vaccine?

The Tdap vaccine protects children and adults against three serious diseases – tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). All three are spread by bacteria. Diphtheria and pertussis are spread from person to person, while tetanus enters the body through scratches, cuts or wounds.

Why must my rising sixth-grader be vaccinated?

State law requires all rising sixth-grade students who have not had a Tdap vaccination since July 2004 to have a booster shot before school starts in August 2009. The vaccine is necessary in order to protect your child as well as other children at the school. In North Carolina, students are required to provide immunization records for certain diseases. If they are not vaccinated or do not provide the appropriate paperwork, state law requires that they are to be excluded from school. Neither the school district nor the principals will do anything that violates state law. As a school system, we have a responsibility to make sure that students are not a danger to themselves or to their classmates.

What is the deadline to get the shot?

The law says all rising sixth-grade students must get the Tdap vaccination by the first day of school on August 25, 2009. The state requires school districts to exclude students who have not been vaccinated.

How do I go about getting my child vaccinated?

You may visit your health care provider to get your child vaccinated. If you do not have a family physician, simply call the Guilford County Department of Public Health at 336-641-7777 to schedule an appointment for a free vaccine.

Would an appointment card suffice for keeping my child in school until he or she gets vaccinated?

No. Unlike the previous year when appointment cards could prevent exclusion from school, there will be no exceptions this time. Under state law, students who have not been vaccinated at the start of the school year must be excluded from school.

Who may I contact for additional information?

Please contact the Guilford County Department of Public Health at 336-641-7777 or your neighborhood Guilford County elementary or middle school. You may also obtain more information at www.immunizenc.com.