



TOMAS ARAGON, MD, MPH
State Public Health Officer & Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



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Governor

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TO: California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program Providers
FROM: Robert Schechter, MD, Chief *RS*
CDPH Immunization Branch
SUBJECT: Fill the Pandemic Immunization Gap;
2021 Recommended Immunization Schedule

FILL THE PANDEMIC IMMUNIZATION GAP!

Big Immunization Gap, 2020-21

Age 4-6 Years
MMR Doses in CAIR

2021
2020
2019

April August

**Fill The Gap—
Keep Vaccinating Your Patients!**

Deferral of routine immunization during the pandemic has already affected more than one of six children due for immunization in California and even more adults. Make plans to catch up your patients ASAP!

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During 2020, as compared with 2019, an estimated

- 12% fewer children under the age of 3 years received an MMR vaccine,
- 19% fewer children ages 4-6 years received an MMR vaccine, and
- 20% fewer adolescents ages 11-13 years old received their Tdap booster.

[Register](#) to participate on May 26, 2021, from noon to 1:00 p.m. in the upcoming VFC 'Afternoon TEACh' webinar, "Catching up Routine Vaccines During the Pandemic." This webinar will review the ACIP recommendations for catch-up immunizations and provide practical immunization tools and resources to increase immunization rates in your clinic. The webinar will be archived at the [Afternoon TEACh page](#).



To bring or keep patients up to date, consider:

- Using the immunization registry and your electronic health record system to identify teens and children who have missed vaccinations and contact them to return to clinic. [CAIR2's upgraded reminder/recall feature](#) may be helpful.
- Plan socially-distanced, dedicated "immunization catch-up" clinics, especially to meet back-to-school demand.
- Consider [novel immunization strategies](#) such as walk-up and drive-through clinics.
- Implement quality improvement strategies such as those supported by the [IQIP program](#).
- For adolescent patients presenting for COVID-19 immunization who are overdue on routine immunizations, administer COVID-19 immunization and routine immunizations at the same visit (see below for more information on coadministration).

2021 IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

The [2021 Recommended Immunization Schedule for Persons 0 Through 18 Years](#) has been approved by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American College of Nurse-Midwives. A summary of the updates and changes to the 2020 immunization schedule was published in the [February 12, 2021 MMWR](#).

Providers are strongly encouraged to print and carefully review the 2021 immunization schedule tables and notes with all staff, especially those who order and administer vaccines. The CA VFC Program will not print and distribute copies of this year's schedule.

Providers are also encouraged to download the [CDC Vaccine Schedule](#) app. If you previously downloaded the app, check that you have version 8.0.1 with 2021 schedules and footnotes. The app provides immediate access within a few clicks to the child, adolescent, and adult ACIP recommendations on any smartphone or tablet. The 2021 immunization schedule is formatted like last year's version. Recommended vaccines are displayed in [Table 1 by age](#), in [Table 2 by catch-up schedule](#), and in [Table 3 by medical indication](#), including pregnancy. Changes to each table and changes to the notes are summarized in the [MMWR](#). Review the details carefully.

Updates include:

Table 1 (by age)

- **HepB:** Arrows to clarify the recommended ages for the second dose.

Table 3 (by medical indication)

- Clarifications on immunizing after pregnancy.

Notes:

- **Additional Information:** includes COVID-19 vaccination recommendations.
- **DTaP and Tdap:** "Special situations" section on wound management.
- **Hib:** No further doses to catch up are needed if a dose was administered at age ≥ 15 months.

- **HepA:** Clarifies that the fourth dose of the accelerated 4-dose series of combined HepA-HepB vaccine at month 12 is a booster dose.
- **HepB:** Clarifications
 - fourth dose of the accelerated 4-dose series of combined HepA-HepB vaccine at month 12 is a booster dose.
 - birth dose for infants weighing <2,000 g. with an HBsAg-negative mother
- **HPV:** If the vaccination schedule is interrupted, no need to restart.
- **Influenza vaccination:** Language for persons who have egg allergy with symptoms other than hives, and regarding severe allergic reactions; LAIV4 should not be used in children aged <2 years. Use of LAIV4 after receipt of newer influenza antiviral medications with longer half-lives.
- **MenACWY:** MenACWY-TT (MenQuadfi™*) added as an option. Clarifies use of MenACWY-CRM (Menveo) in infants who received dose 1 at 3–6 months.
- **Pneumococcal vaccination:** Clarifying recommendations for administering PPSV23 after PCV13.

* MenQuadfi™ (MenACWY Vaccine) will soon be available through the VFC Program. Please be on the lookout for an upcoming communication on this product, including recommendations for use, ordering and billing, as well as vaccine management.

Coadministration of COVID-19 Vaccines with other Vaccines

On May 14th, 2021, [ACIP updated information on coadministration of COVID-19 vaccines](#) with other vaccines. COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines may now be administered without regard to timing, including simultaneous administration on the same day, as well as coadministration within 14 days. Given the gaps in routine immunization noted above, recent ACIP guidelines may offer an opportunity to catch up adolescents with overdue immunizations as they receive COVID-19 vaccines.

When deciding whether to coadminister another vaccine(s) with COVID-19 vaccines, providers should consider whether the patient is behind or at risk of becoming behind on recommended vaccines, their risk of vaccine-preventable disease (e.g., during an outbreak or occupational exposures), and the reactogenicity profile of the vaccines.

REPORT ADVERSE EVENTS

Report vaccine adverse events to [VAERS](#) and administration errors to [VERP](#). Reporting information to these national surveillance systems helps ensure patient safety. Download the [VAERS/VERP flier](#) and review it with staff who prepare and administer vaccines.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, please call your VFC Field Representative or the VFC Program at 877-243-8832 (877-2GET-VFC) or visit www.EZIZ.org.