



# NEWS RELEASE



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **(7/21/25) Stay Up to Date with Routine Vaccinations (August is National Immunization Month)**

August is National Immunization Month. As part of this year's IDPH's Back-to-School vaccination campaign, Southern 7 Health Department (S7HD) is reminding families it's not too late to schedule your child's school shots, and to make sure everyone in the family is up to date on routine vaccinations.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDC reported a concerning drop in routine immunizations for children and adults, from which the nation has yet to fully recover. Vaccination rates among Kindergarteners have remained high and stable for decades in the U.S. However, during the two years following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, coverage dropped from 95% to 93%; the lowest level in the last decade.

Many children who experienced delayed vaccination during the pandemic are still behind schedule. This is especially concerning given that this year's Kindergartners were born at the beginning of the pandemic. Southern 7 Health Department encourages parents to plan early to avoid any delays in the vaccination process.

"Vaccination is the best defense against many life-threatening illnesses. But we understand that while the majority of vaccines have been around for decades, parents often have concerns", said Shawwna Rhine, S7HD Community Outreach Coordinator. "By scheduling their child's vaccination appointment early you'll have more time to talk with their provider about your concerns, collect necessary paperwork, confirm needed vaccines, and ensure there are no delays at your child's vaccination appointment."

Southern 7 Health Department provides the recommended vaccinations for all ages at each of their seven clinic offices. These include MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella), Varicella (Chicken Pox), D-TaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis, aka Whooping Cough), Hib (Haemophilus Influenza), Hepatitis B, Pneumococcal Disease, and Polio.

Other vaccinations including COVID-19, Flu, and HPV (Human Papillomavirus) are also recommended, but not required, for school admission in Illinois. Children and adults can also schedule their Flu and COVID-19 shots at the department as needed.

To help make the process a bit easier for kids, children immunized through Southern 7 Health Department will receive a coupon, while supplies last, for a free ice cream cone through the department's annual "Ice Cream for Vaccines" program. The program is sponsored by Dairy Queen in Anna and Vienna, and McDonald's in Metropolis.

To find out if you and/or your child are current for routine vaccinations, or to schedule an appointment at a public health clinic near you, call 618-634-2297, visit [southern7.org](http://southern7.org), or download the Southern 7 app.

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