



Frequently Asked Questions About Rhode Island's Child Care Worker Immunization Regulations

According to Rhode Island's immunization regulations for child care centers, who needs to be vaccinated?

Anyone who is temporarily or permanently employed by a preschool, daycare center, or home-based center that is licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and who has contact with children in that facility. People need to be vaccinated even if they have indirect contact with children.

What vaccinations are required?

Vaccinations required every year:

- 1 dose of flu vaccine

Vaccinations required one time:

- 2 doses of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine – the second dose must be administered 4 weeks after the first
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine – the second dose must be administered 4 weeks after the first
- 1 dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine

Are there any exceptions to these requirements?

- Child care workers do not need to receive these vaccinations if they received them in the past. This can be shown with an immunization record, a medical passport, or any other official record that shows the month, day, and year of the vaccinations.
- If someone cannot be vaccinated against a disease for medical reasons, that person is exempt from the immunization requirement for that disease. A medical exemption certificate is available online at www.health.ri.gov/forms/exemption/MedicalImmunizationExemptionCertificateForChildcareWorkers.pdf The Medical Exemption Certificate must be completed by a licensed healthcare provider acting within his/her scope of practice (physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner).
- Child care workers born before 1957 are not required to get MMR vaccine.
- Child care workers born before 1980 are not required to get varicella (chickenpox) vaccine.
- Child care workers do not need to get varicella (chickenpox) vaccine if they had varicella (chickenpox or shingles) in the past. This can be demonstrated with a signed statement from a licensed healthcare provider acting within his/her scope of practice (physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner).
- If a child care worker is already immune to a disease, vaccination against that disease is not required. Immunity must be demonstrated with laboratory evidence (also called a titer). The charges for lab tests vary, but the estimated cost is between \$25 and \$50 for each titer. Some insurance plans cover the cost of these lab tests. Check with your insurer.

Where can staff at child care centers be vaccinated?

Immunization clinics for child care workers

In May and June 2015, a series of immunization clinics will be open to child care workers. There is no cost for vaccinations at these clinics. Call 401-490-0942 for dates and locations.

St. Joseph's Immunization Walk-in Clinic for Adults

Child care workers who are uninsured, or who have insurance that does not cover immunizations, can be vaccinated at St. Joseph's Immunization Walk-in Clinic (21 Peace Street, Providence, Rhode Island). Call 401-456-4321 to schedule an appointment.

Doctors' offices and Pharmacies

Call in advance to find out what types of health insurance are accepted.

By what date do child care workers have to receive these vaccines?

Child care workers need to receive Tdap, MMR and Varicella vaccines by August 1, 2015 and flu vaccine is required annually by December 31.

I am not sure if I have received a certain vaccine. Is it safe to get vaccinated again?

Yes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, if you have already received a vaccine in the past and cannot locate your record of vaccination, it is safe to receive that vaccine again.

Why are staff in child care settings being required to receive these immunizations?

These vaccinations are required for child care workers to protect infants and children in their care. Although infants and preschool age children are required to be "age appropriately vaccinated," they are still too young to be fully vaccinated. Some vaccine series are not complete until age 5 or 6.

Can child care workers wear masks during flu season instead of getting flu shots?

No, child care workers cannot wear masks during flu season instead of getting flu shots. This is not practical in the child care setting. People with concerns about flu vaccination can be referred to the Rhode Island Department of Health at 401-222-5960. Additionally, the Rhode Island Department of Health can provide flu educational material for child care centers and on-site training for child care workers and parents about the flu and the benefits of flu vaccine.

What happens if there is an outbreak at a child care center?

If there is an outbreak of a disease at a child care center, the Department of Health will consult with the facility to determine if exclusion of any unvaccinated individuals is necessary. If this is the case people who cannot demonstrate immunity to that disease must be fully vaccinated against that disease. This requirement is in place during outbreaks even for people born before 1957 and 1980.

What should a child care center do if staff do not comply with these immunization regulations?

If child care center staff do not comply with these immunization regulations, they should not be permitted to work at that child care center.

Where can I find more information about immunization and these requirements?

Rhode Island Department of Health: www.health.ri.gov/immunization/for/schools

401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/vaccines

The Immunization Action Coalition: www.immunize.org