



## 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) which provides regular educational services to pre-school aged children. This applies to those who have direct or 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](http://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 if immunity can be verified with laboratory testing (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.

### **Some DCYF childcare workers work in after school programs with school age children. Do the immunization requirements apply to them?**

No. The immunization requirements only apply to childcare workers who care for preschool age children in a DCYF licensed facility.

### **Where can child care center staff 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 health insurance carrier in advance to find out what vaccines are covered and if there is a cost.

### **By what date do child care workers need to receive these vaccines?**

Child care workers need to receive Tdap, MMR and Varicella vaccines by August 1, 2015. The 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 a disease outbreak at a child care center?**

If there is an outbreak of a disease at a child care center, the Rhode Island Department of Health will consult with the facility to determine if exclusion of any unvaccinated individuals is necessary. Unvaccinated people who cannot demonstrate immunity to the identified 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](http://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](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)

The Immunization Action Coalition: [www.immunize.org](http://www.immunize.org)