

AVOID LAST MINUTE BACK-TO-SCHOOL PANIC

Schedule Child Wellness Exams Early for Required Sports Physicals and Immunization Records

From the bright eyes of kindergarteners to the rolling eyes of teenagers, parents are facing the chaos of the back-to-school season. Required immunization records and sports physical are easy to forget among the long list of school supplies. Avoid this last-minute panic by scheduling a wellness exam and gathering the necessary documents well before schools starts.

National Immunization Awareness Month is held in August and informs parents about vaccinations and the requirements for kindergarteners and sixth graders. A full list of vaccinations for each age is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (Use the QR code to see the immunization schedule.)

Vaccination is just one step to keep kids healthy. As the halls fill, a multitude of hands are covering coughs and touching doorknobs and handrails. Washing hands and remembering to cover a cough are important practices to reduce the risk for a cold, flu, or other infectious disease.

"As kids are exposed to more germs and viruses at school, the chances your child will end up at home in bed are higher," said Rebecca Sime, RN, Project Firstline, ([sdprojectfirstline.org](https://www.sdprojectfirstline.org)) program manager for the South Dakota Foundation for Medical Care (SDFMC). "The common cold is miserable enough. Many children have fallen behind on regular vaccination and the risk for serious disease like measles, mumps, and chicken pox has increased."

Pre-teens and teenagers preparing for college may need booster shots and vaccination to protect from HPV-related cancers and spinal meningitis.

Like any medication, vaccines may cause some minor side effects. Younger children may act fussy. Some kids feel sore where the shot was given or develop a low-grade fever. Applying a cool, wet washcloth on the sore area and offering extra hugs helps ease discomfort.

"Now is the time to get caught up. Routine immunizations are key to controlling vaccine preventable diseases," explained Sime. "Vaccinating on time means healthier children, families, and communities."

Is your child ready for school?
Check the age requirements on the **immunization schedule**.



WE ARE **PROJECT FIRSTLINE**



Infection prevention keeps you healthy during cold and flu season.

Get vaccinated. Wash your hands. Cover your cough.

Check out <https://www.sdprojectfirstline.org> for infection prevention training.

BRIGHT START ENCOURAGES IMMUNIZATION

Pregnant women and infants need extra protection against germs and viruses. Regular appointments and immunizations help keep mom and baby healthy. Bright Start home visiting nurses provide information on upcoming immunizations and well visits to keep growing babies on track.

"Supporting first-time expecting and new moms through pregnancy and into the toddler phase is an amazing journey," shared Emily Carlson, BSN, RN, Bright Start home visiting nurse. "When I visit their home, I can answer their questions about caring for themselves and their baby."

First-time moms who meet income requirements or have a qualifying risk factor are eligible for the program. Anyone can use the **Bright Start Referral Form** to learn more about the education and support options.



SOUTH DAKOTA
Foundation for Medical Care

The South Dakota Foundation for Medical Care (SDFMC) partners with the South Dakota Department of Health to support Bright Start (<https://doh.sd.gov/family/pregnancy/BrightStart.aspx>) and the South Dakota Project Firstline (<https://www.sdprojectfirstline.org>). Learn more about SDFMC at <https://sdfmc.org>.