

Acknowledgement of Religious Exemption

(To accompany religious exemption letter submitted by parent/guardian)

Religious exemptions to immunizations for your child are accepted pursuant to New Jersey Administrative Code regulations 8:57-4.4.

§8:57-4.4 Religious Exemptions

- (a) Each school, preschool, or child care center shall exempt a child from mandatory immunization if the child's parent or guardian submits to the school, preschool, or child care center a written, signed statement requesting an exemption, pursuant to the requirements for religious exemption established at N.J.S.A. 26:1A-9.1, on "the ground that the . . . immunization interferes with the free exercise of the pupil's religious rights."
- (d) A school, preschool, or child care center may exclude children with religious exemptions from receiving immunizing agents from the school, preschool, or child care center during a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak or threatened outbreak as determined by the Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health, or his or her designee.
- (e) As provided by N.J.S.A. 26:4-6, "Anybody having control of a school may, on account of the prevalence of any communicable disease, or to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, prohibit the attendance of any teacher or pupil of any school under their control and specify the time during which the teacher or scholar shall remain away from school."
 - 1. The NJ Department of Health shall provide guidance to the school on the appropriateness of any such prohibition.
- (f) Those children enrolled in school, preschool, or child care centers before September 1, 1991, and who have previously been granted a religious exemption, shall not be required to reapply for a new religious exemption under N.J.A.C. 8:57-4.4(a)

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- I/We have received and read the attached vaccine information and acknowledge not giving immunizations to my/our child/children may put them at risk for serious illness and death.
 - I/We would like my/our child to be exempt from mandatory immunizations. Administering vaccine(s) to my/our child interferes with my/our religious beliefs. I/We accept the associated risks to my/our child.
 - I/We also understand in the event my/our child does receive a/an immunization(s) on or after the signed date of the religious exemption, the religious exemption is **null and void**. My/Our child is therefore deficient in mandatory vaccines and will be required to receive mandated immunizations.

Child Name _____ DOB _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Name of School Official _____ Title _____

Signature of School Official _____ Date _____

Why get vaccinated?

Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis are all serious diseases caused by bacteria. Diphtheria and Pertussis are spread from person to person. Tetanus enters the body through cuts or wounds.

DIPHTHERIA causes a thick covering in the back of the throat.

- It can lead to breathing problems, paralysis, heart failure and even death.

TETANUS (Lockjaw) causes painful tightening of the muscles, usually all over the body.

- It can lead to "locking" of the jaw so the victim cannot open his mouth or swallow. Tetanus leads to death in about 1 out of 10 cases.

PERTUSSIS (Whooping Cough) causes coughing spells so bad that it is hard for infants to eat, drink or breathe. These spells can last for weeks.

- It can lead to pneumonia, seizures (jerking and staring spells), brain damage and death.

Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis vaccine (Dtap) can help prevent these diseases. Most children who are vaccinated with Dtap will be protected throughout childhood. Many more children would get these diseases if we stopped vaccinating. Dtap is a safer version of an older vaccine called DTP. DTP is no longer used in the United States.

Chickenpox (also called Varicella) is a common childhood disease. It is usually mild, but it can be serious, especially in young infants and adults.

- The chickenpox virus can be spread from person to person through the air, or by contact with fluid from chickenpox blisters.
- It causes a rash, itching, fever and tiredness.
- It can lead to severe skin infection, scars, pneumonia, brain damage or death.
- A person who has had chickenpox can get a painful rash called shingles years later.
- About 12,000 people are hospitalized for chickenpox each year in the United States.
- About 100 people die each year in the United States as a result of chickenpox.

Chickenpox vaccine can prevent chickenpox. Most people who get chickenpox vaccine will not get the chickenpox. But if someone who has been vaccinated does get chickenpox, it is usually very mild. They will have fewer spots, are less likely to have a fever and will recover faster.

Measles, Mumps and Rubella are serious diseases.

Measles

- Measles virus causes rash, cough, runny nose, eye irritation and fever.
- It can lead to ear infection, pneumonia, seizures (jerking and staring), brain damage and death.

Mumps

- Mumps virus causes fever, headache and swollen glands.
- It can lead to deafness, meningitis (infections of the brain and spinal cord covering), painful swelling of the testicles or ovaries, and, rarely, death.

Rubella (German Measles)

- Rubella virus causes rash, mild fever and arthritis (mostly in women).
- If a woman gets rubella while she is pregnant, she could have a miscarriage or her baby could be born with serious birth defects.

You or your child could catch these diseases by being around someone who has them. They spread from person to person through the air.

Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine can prevent these diseases.

Most children who get their MMR shots will not get these diseases. Many more children would get them if we stopped vaccinating.

Hepatitis B is a serious disease.

The hepatitis B virus (HBV) can cause short term illness that leads to:

- Loss of appetite
- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Tiredness
- Jaundice (yellow skin or eyes)
- Pain in muscles, joints and stomach

It can also cause long-term (chronic) illness that leads to:

- Liver damage
- Liver cancer
- Death

About 1.25 million people in the U.S. have chronic HBV infection.

Each year it is estimated that:

- 80,000 people, mostly young adults, get infected with HBV
- More than 11,000 people have to stay in the hospital because of hepatitis B
- 4,000 to 5,000 people die from chronic hepatitis B

Hepatitis B vaccine can prevent hepatitis B. It is the first anti-cancer vaccine because it can prevent a form of liver cancer.

What is polio?

Polio is a disease caused by a virus. It enters a child's (or adult's) body through the mouth. Sometimes it does not cause serious illness. But sometimes it causes paralysis (can't move arm or leg). It can kill people who get it, usually by paralyzing the muscles that help them breathe. Polio used to be very common in the United States. It paralyzed and killed thousands of people a year before we had a vaccine for it.

Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) can prevent polio.

History: A 1916 polio epidemic in the United States killed 6,000 people and paralyzed 27,000 more. In the early 1950's there were more than 20,000 cases of polio each year. Polio vaccination was begun in 1955. By 1960 the number of cases had dropped to about 3,000 and by 1979 there were only about 10. The success of polio vaccination in the U.S. and other countries sparked a world-wide effort to eliminate polio.

Today: No wild polio has been reported in the United States for over 20 years. But the disease is still common in some parts of the world. It would only take one case of polio from another country to bring the disease back if we were not protected by vaccine. If the effort to eliminate the disease from the world is successful, some day we won't need polio vaccine. Until then, we need to keep getting our children vaccinated.

Meningococcal is a serious bacterial illness.

This can cause bacterial meningitis. Meningitis is an infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. Antibiotics are given to treat bacterial meningitis, but even with treatment, 10 to 15% of people with the disease die. Bacterial meningitis can cause life-long effects in people once they recover: some are deaf, some have seizures, problems with the nervous system, some lose an arm or leg.

Menactra or Menveo, both licensed vaccines, will prevent 4 types of meningococcal disease. These vaccines will also prevent 2 to 3 of the most common types of meningitis seen in the United States.