



The mission of the International School of Monterey is to educate all children toward becoming conscientious, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world.

Whooping Cough Immunization Requirements

California law, effective July 1, 2011, requires students to be vaccinated against whooping cough, also known as pertussis.

All new ISM students entering 7th and 8th grade must provide proof of an adolescent whooping cough (Tdap) booster shot *before starting school*.

By law, students **must have proof** of a Tdap booster shot and **will not be allowed to start school** without documentation. *Please note: The tetanus-diphtheria booster shot, Td, does **not** meet the requirement.*

On the next page, you will find more information about the Tdap vaccine and this immunization requirement.

To ensure all 7th and 8th graders at ISM know about this vaccine requirement and start school on time, we urge you to:

- 1) Review the information on the next page.
- 2) Assess your child's status.
*Your child meets the requirement if they received the Tdap vaccine **after** age seven. The DTaP at age five does not meet the requirement. Most children receive the Tdap at 11-12 years old during a health checkup.*
- 3) Get your child's Tdap shot now, if necessary.
Many students need a Tdap shot before school starts. Schedule an appointment with your doctor or clinic for a Tdap booster soon to avoid the back-to-school rush!
- 4) Provide a copy of your child's booster once it is received and **no later than the first day of school**. You can hand deliver this proof to the ISM front office, fax to 831-899-7653, or email to admissions@ismonterey.org.
- 5) Save your proof of immunization. Keep the original proof of your child's Tdap booster shot in a safe place.

Getting the whooping cough (Tdap) booster shot now protects your child and infants too young for the vaccine. It meets school requirements, ensuring your child starts school on time. Be proactive!

If you have any questions, please contact the Enrollment and Data Manager at admissions@ismonterey.org or 831-583-2171.

Whooping Cough (Pertussis) Information

By Former ISM Parent and Board Trustee, and Local Pediatrician, Dr. Valerie Josephson, M.D.

Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, is a serious illness caused by the bacterium *Bordetella Pertussis*. In 2010, California had its worst whooping cough epidemic in 50 years. The epidemic usually occurs every five years, but this one was particularly severe.

Whooping cough starts like a cold, with a runny nose and mild cough, but no fever. After two weeks, the cough gets much worse, causing fits of coughing that leave the person breathless and exhausted. The cough can last for weeks or months. About half the time, you hear a "whooping" sound when breathing after coughing. Severe episodes can cause vomiting, broken ribs, turning blue, or fainting. In babies under 3 months, it can be deadly. Visit [Merck Medical Manual](#) to hear what the whooping sounds like.

It sounds scary, and it is, but whooping cough is preventable. Children are vaccinated against pertussis as part of their routine childhood immunizations. The DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis) vaccine is given to infants at 2, 4, 6, and 15-18 months, with a booster at 4-6 years. A child is protected only after the first three to four doses. Fully vaccinated children are 80-85% less likely to get whooping cough than unvaccinated children.

The immunity created by the vaccine does not last for a lifetime. Most children lose their immunity by middle school, which likely contributed to the 2010 whooping cough outbreak and the ongoing waves of outbreaks. In 2005, a new vaccine, the Tdap booster, was introduced for older children and adults. It is recommended for everyone 7 and older who is not fully vaccinated. All adolescents should receive the Tdap booster at 11-12 years old, **even with earlier vaccines**. California **requires** 7th graders to receive the Tdap booster. Women of childbearing age should receive the booster before, during, or after pregnancy to protect their newborns. Adults around pregnant women or babies also need the booster. The only way to protect the most vulnerable infants is to prevent the illness in those people around them.

Treatment for whooping cough (pertussis) includes supportive care and antibiotics. Antibiotics do not shorten the illness but prevent it from spreading to others.