

THE EPI EXCHANGE

News from the Hampton and Peninsula Health Districts Epidemiology Team

Welcome to this special edition of The Epi Exchange – Back to School!

The Hampton and Peninsula Health Districts' Epidemiology Teams are pleased to welcome you to our back-to-school edition of the newsletter. As school communities prepare for a new academic year, we remain committed to supporting our schools with timely guidance on communicable diseases, immunizations, and additional resources to help keep students and staff healthy. We value your partnership and look forward to continuing our collaborative work to promote a safe and healthy school year!

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Immunizations

Parents or guardians must provide official proof that a child has received required vaccines for their age to attend any public or private school (elementary, middle or high), childcare center, nursery school, family day care home, or developmental center. All vaccines must be given according to the timing and spacing rules in the vaccination schedules from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). If a child follows either the current AAP or AAFP vaccination schedule, including their catch-up schedules, and meets all minimum age and timing requirements, the child is considered properly vaccinated for school attendance.

[American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\) Schedule](#)

[American Academy of Family Physicians \(AAFP\) Schedule](#)



Image Source: [VDH School Requirements](#)

For the full list of vaccine minimum requirements, visit [VDH Immunization School Requirements](#) today!

Back to School Communication Toolkit

The Virginia Department of Health [Back-to-School Communication Toolkit](#) provides parents, schools, and community partners with multilingual flyers, social media graphics, print materials, and videos to promote routine checkups, required immunizations, and healthy habits for the academic year.

Resources include:

- Back to School Checklists for [Currently Enrolled](#) and [Newly Enrolled](#) students.
- [Ready for Kindergarten](#) handout with information for parents and families.
- Materials in languages other than English – Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Haitian Creole, Korean, Pashto, Tagalog, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese!

Back to School



Get Students Ready for Back to School

Use this this toolkit to remind parents to schedule their child's checkups and vaccine appointments.

Image Source: [VDH Back to School Toolkit](#)

Communicable Disease Reference Chart

The [Communicable Disease Reference Chart for School and Childcare Facility Personnel](#) is a super handy resource for anyone working in schools or childcare. It breaks down all the common illnesses kids and staff might come across, from chickenpox, hand-foot-and-mouth, flu, and more, and explains what symptoms to look for, how each illness spreads, and when someone should stay home or can safely come back. Instead of digging through long medical documents or trying to remember complicated rules, everything you need is laid out in one easy chart you can reference anytime.

What makes this tool so useful is how much stress it takes off school staff. When someone gets sick, it can be tough to know what steps to take, who needs to be notified, or whether a child needs to be excluded. This chart gives quick, clear answers so you can act confidently and consistently. It’s especially great during busy times of year when multiple illnesses are circulating. It helps keep classrooms safe, reduces guesswork, and makes communication with families smoother. If you’re looking for a simple, reliable way to stay on top of communicable illness guidance, this chart is a must-have!

Communicable Disease Reference Chart for School and Childcare Facility Personnel*				
Disease	Incubation period	Transmission	Common symptoms	Recommendations
Chickenpox [†] (Varicella)	14–16 days (Range 10–21 days) Incubation period may be longer (28 days or more) in persons who receive immune globulin for postexposure prophylaxis (VarIZIG or IVIG). Incubation period may be shorter in persons with weakened immune systems.	Direct contact with vesicular fluid or by airborne spread from respiratory tract secretions. Infectious from 2 days before rash onset until all lesions have dried/crusted over and no new lesions appear within a 24-hour period (average is 4–7 days). Communicability may be prolonged in people with weakened immune systems.	Sudden onset with slight fever, other systemic symptoms and itchy eruptions which become vesicular (small blisters) within a few hours. The rash first appears on the chest, back, and face, and then spreads over the entire body. Lesions commonly occur in successive crops, with several stages of maturity present at the same time. Typically, vesicular rash consisting of 250–500 lesions in varying stages of development (papules, vesicles) and resolution (crusting).	PATIENT: Exclude from school or childcare setting until: - Uncomplicated varicella regardless of vaccine status: the rash has crusted - Immunized patients without crust: no new lesions appear within a 24-hour period - Patients with weakened immune systems: at least 5 days after eruptions first appear or until vesicles become dry Avoid exposure to women in early pregnancy who have not had chickenpox and/or varicella vaccine. CONTACTS: Check vaccination status of contacts in school and childcare setting and recommend vaccination if needed within 3 days and up to 5 days after exposure. For exposed contacts without immunity: - School setting: exclusion not recommended unless an outbreak (three or more epi-linked cases within 21 days in group or facility) is reported; monitor for varicella symptoms for 8–21 days from exposure and until 28 days after for those who received VarIZIG or IVIG.

Image Source: [VDH Communicable Disease Reference Chart](#)

School Health Information Station

The Virginia Department of Health offers a [School Health Information Station](#) featuring:

- [First Aid Guide](#): A practical flipchart for childcare and school emergencies, covering step-by-step actions for injuries and illnesses.
- [Mental Health Toolkit](#): In collaboration with Virginia Mental Health Access Program (VMAP), Virginia Chapter-AAP, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), Virginia Association of School Nurses (VASN), and The REACH Institute, this resource supports school nurses with tools for student mental health.
- Multiple Quick-Access Resources - A comprehensive suite of documents and tools, including:
 - Healthcare procedures and medication administration guidelines
 - Action plans and checklists
 - Adolescent vaccine consent forms and immunization record tools
 - Templates for HIPAA/FERPA compliant information sharing

This centralized hub equips school health professionals with crucial training materials, forms, and action plans to support the well-being and safety of students.



Image Source: [VDH School Health Information Station](#)

Bring HPHD to Your Next Community Event!



Have an upcoming health fair, community gathering, or outreach event? Our HPHD team is ready to provide health education, trainings, resources, and more, all tailored to your community's needs. Submit a request through the [HPHD Outreach Request Form](#) and let us support your next event with trusted, accessible health information.

VDH Comms Hub

Looking for more public health resources? The [VDH Comms Hub](#) is your go-to source to streamline outreach and engagement. It offers:

- Trending topics & ready-made materials
- Multi-topic, multilanguage resources
- Public health toolkits

The Comms Hub
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Equip your team with evidence-based and customizable tools, all in one place to support swift, clear, and culturally responsive outreach.

Questions or concerns? Contact us today!

Hampton

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Serving the Cities of Newport News, Poquoson, Williamsburg, & the Counties of James City and York

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Want to help shape future editions of this newsletter?
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