



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 9, 2010  
PH10-064

**CONTACT:** Michael Sicilia  
Melinda McRae Beer  
(916) 440-7259

## **READY FOR SCHOOL? NOT UNLESS YOU ARE VACCINATED**

SACRAMENTO – With the new school year underway, Dr. Mark Horton, director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), is urging parents to make sure that their children are fully vaccinated, and that children and others groups, particularly those who live or work around young infants, are vaccinated against pertussis (whooping cough). As of September 7, 2010, California has recorded 3,834 illnesses and eight deaths due to pertussis, a 52-year high for that vaccine-preventable illness.

"Immunization is one of the greatest health-related achievements in history," said Horton. "Each year thousands of Californian children and adults are protected from serious illnesses and even death because they were immunized. Vaccines have eradicated smallpox worldwide and polio in the United States, significantly reduced measles, diphtheria, rubella, bacterial meningitis, and a host of other diseases."

Most parents are aware that children entering kindergarten need to be vaccinated against polio, pertussis, hepatitis B, measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox. However, only a handful of parents of adolescents know that their preteens need more shots.

"I thought that I was done with vaccines when my kids reached kindergarten," said Terry Mock, a mother of two from Northern California. "I'm glad I was told my 11-year-old also needed shots against meningitis, HPV, flu, and pertussis. My kids could be exposed to a disease like pertussis in school. I want them to be protected."

For more information on family immunizations, parents should talk to their doctor, review the [recommended immunization schedule](#), and see this message from Dr. Horton about [vaccine facts](#). Also, if the family lacks health coverage, or their carrier does not cover vaccines, they should contact their local health departments for free or low-cost vaccines.

[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)

