



Monthly Immunization Update

February 2026

Dear Providers and Partners,

The purpose of this newsletter is to deliver quick and meaningful updates to support our providers in a variety of vaccine settings and, maintain our connection with all of you. We welcome your questions and comments. Please feel free to share this newsletter with your colleagues. Thank you!

CDPH Continues to Strongly Recommend the Hepatitis B Birth Dose for All Newborns

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), along with the [West Coast Health Alliance](#), the [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#), the [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists \(ACOG\)](#), and the [American Nurse Association](#) continue to recommend that providers routinely offer and administer the first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine to all newborns weighing at least 2,000 grams (4 pounds, 7 ounces) within 24 hours of birth, followed by completion of the vaccine series. This recommendation remains in place despite a recent vote by CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to change a decades-long recommendation for the hepatitis B birth dose from a universal approach to “individual-based-decision making” for infants born to mothers who test hepatitis B-negative.



Why the Birth Dose Matters

The hepatitis B vaccine at birth provides a critical early layer of protection against a virus that can cause lifelong liver disease when acquired in infancy. Hepatitis B can be transmitted from an infected parent during delivery or from others in contact with the baby after birth. The virus spreads easily, even in the absence of visible blood or body fluids and can survive on surfaces for up to seven days.

When infants are infected, approximately 90% develop chronic hepatitis B, significantly increasing their risk of cirrhosis, liver failure, and liver cancer later in life. Up to 25% of infected children die prematurely from hepatitis-related disease. Administering the first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours of birth dramatically reduces the risk of infection, especially for babies born to parents with hepatitis B.

CDPH continues to support a universal birth dose approach because many people with hepatitis B are unaware of their infection. This strategy ensures that all newborns are protected, even if a parent’s infection is missed or testing is delayed. Newborns also respond well to the vaccine. After completing the recommended 3-dose series in the first 18 months of life, most children develop strong, long-lasting immunity. Since the introduction of universal infant hepatitis

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B vaccination in 1991, hepatitis B infections among children and teens in the U.S [have declined by 90-99%](#), underscoring how effective the birth dose strategy has been.



How to Talk to Parents About the Hepatitis B Birth Dose

- “The hepatitis B vaccine at birth is a safe, effective, and proven way to protect your baby from a serious virus that can cause lifelong liver disease. It has been given since the 1990s and has helped reduce hepatitis B infections in children and teens by up to 99%.”
- “I continue to strongly recommend the birth dose for all newborns even though some federal advisors disagree. Here’s why: testing during pregnancy can sometimes miss infections, and babies can easily be exposed to hepatitis B from other household members or caregivers. Giving the vaccine within 24 hours of birth provides early protection when it matters most.”
- “Preventing hepatitis B is critical, as 90% of babies infected at birth or in early infancy go on to develop chronic hepatitis B, which can lead to liver cancer or even death. I, along with public health experts and my colleagues (at AAP/ACOG) strongly recommend the birth dose for every baby. It’s a simple, safe step that offers powerful protection for your child’s future.”

American Heart Month

February is American Heart Month, a time for people to focus on their cardiovascular health. Every year, thousands of people with heart or vascular disease experience serious complications from vaccine-preventable infections. You can help protect your heart and health through vaccination. Vaccines of particular importance for people with heart disease include:



- COVID-19
- Influenza
- Pneumococcal
- RSV (If age 60 years or older)

Updates and Statement from CDPH

Following the most [recent pronouncement](#) from leadership at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on January 5, the California Department of Public Health and organizations across the country have weighed in with support for the current [American Academy of Pediatrics 2025 Immunization Schedule](#) and support for using research, science and evidence to guide professional recommendations for vaccination.

California and American Academy of Pediatrics-recommended vaccines will continue to be covered by health plans and insurers regulated by the State of California. Vaccines can be received at no cost from your doctor, some local pharmacies, or other authorized providers.

Find full statement here: [Joint Statement from California Health and Human Services Leaders on Vaccine Access and Availability](#)

Ventura County Public Health Immunization Program

Email: immunization.program@venturacounty.gov

Phone: (805)981-5211

Fax: (805)981-5210



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