

POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Middle & high school students required to receive whooping cough booster by Aug. 2011

New California Law (AB 354) requires that students in grades 7-12 beginning with the 2011-2012 school year receive a booster shot against pertussis (whooping cough). The letter below is being sent by middle and high school principals to parents of PUSD students in grades 6-11. Information is also being placed on the PUSD and middle and high school websites.

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Due to the very serious Pertussis (also known as Whooping Cough) epidemic in California, there is a new law that requires immunization prior to the start of the 2011-2012 school year. Every student entering 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades will need proof of a Tdap booster shot before starting school.

The most common sign of Pertussis (whooping cough) among older children and adults is a mild to severe cough (often worse at night) that lasts for many weeks and can result in prolonged absences from school and work. While coughing during these weeks, infected people are also spreading this disease to others. Infants can get whooping cough from an infected adult or older child who often doesn't even realize they have the disease. Infants who get whooping cough can get very ill and die. Sadly, in California, there have been more infant deaths from whooping cough this year than any other year ever!

Now is a good time for middle and high school students, as well as adults to be vaccinated with Tdap. This will help to protect against these diseases and to help to stop the Pertussis (whooping cough) epidemic which is of great concern for the infants in our community. Pertussis is best prevented by this vaccine. Children under age 10 years will have maximum protection if they were fully vaccinated (5 shots) with a vaccine called Dtap (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis) prior to age 6 years. Children 10 years of age and older and adults are best protected if they have a booster vaccine called Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis). The vaccine is safe and has been used for many years.

There are several options for obtaining the vaccine. All primary doctors' offices and community clinics offer the Tdap vaccine. In addition, County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency offers vaccine at their clinics which are held regularly throughout the county. Call 1-866-358-2966 or check out www.sdiz.org (click New Pertussis Information) for immunization clinic locations and more information.

If your middle or high school student has already met this vaccine requirement (has had the Tdap booster at 10 years of age or older), please provide our Health Office with a copy of your child's yellow immunization card or other written proof of immunization. Otherwise, please make arrangements for your child to have the Tdap booster vaccine as soon as possible to ensure compliance at the start of the new school year.