

Oregon School and Children's Facility Immunization Law: Nonmedical Exemption Changes in Effect, as of March 1, 2014.

(Updated May, 2014)

In 2013, Oregon passed legislation that changes the process for claiming a nonmedical exemption to school and children's facility immunization requirements. This law is in effect as of March 1, 2014.

More information is available at: www.healthoregon.org/vaccineexemption

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the new law change?

The new law requires parents and guardians who want to claim a nonmedical exemption to receive education about the benefits and risks of vaccination prior to claiming the exemption.

Parents and guardians have two options to receive this education:

1. Talk to a healthcare practitioner. The practitioner can sign a Vaccine Education Certificate that the parent will submit to their child's school or child care, along with the child's completed Certificate of Immunization Status.

OR

2. View the online vaccine education module. The parent or guardian will print a Vaccine Education Certificate at the end of the module, to be turned into their child's school or child care, along with the child's completed Certificate of Immunization Status.

The law also changes the language from "religious exemption" to "nonmedical exemption." This change better encompasses the breadth of reasons why a parent or guardian may choose to claim an exemption.

When did these changes take effect?

March 1, 2014.

Who does the new law apply to?

The new process will apply to parents or guardians claiming nonmedical exemptions for:

- Children entering a child care, preschool or Head Start program
- Children starting school for the first time, such as kindergartners
- Students who have never been in an Oregon school before
- Children whose exemptions change—for example, if a parent decides to exempt their child for an additional vaccine that was not previously on their record.

What documentation will parents turn into schools or child cares?

Parents will need to submit two pieces of documentation to the school or child care to claim a nonmedical exemption:

1. Either a Vaccine Education Certificate signed by a healthcare practitioner or a Vaccine Education Certificate printed from the online educational module. These certificates show the vaccines that the parent received education about, and may therefore claim a nonmedical exemption; and
2. A Certificate of Immunization Status (CIS), signed by the parent. The parent needs to mark each vaccine for which the nonmedical exemption is being claimed on this form. The parent may only mark vaccines on the CIS for which the parent has received education from a healthcare practitioner or online educational module.

Where will schools and child cares keep these certificates?

The Vaccine Education Certificate documenting education from a healthcare practitioner or online module should be attached to the child's Certificate of Immunization Status form. Maintain the documentation as you normally maintain immunization records.

Is the Vaccine Education Certificate that prints from the online vaccine education module supposed to appear fuzzy?

Yes, the certificate appears fuzzy when printed. This is due to the program used to create the online module.

I received a Vaccine Education Certificate printed from the online vaccine education module, but the end of the parent's name was cut off. Is this acceptable?

Yes. Only the first 15 characters of the first name and the first 15 characters of the last name will print on the Vaccine Education Certificate. This is due to the program used to create the online module. If the certificate is missing the parent's name entirely, the certificate is not valid.

Where are the links to the online educational module and the certificate for a healthcare practitioner to sign?

Links are available at: www.healthoregon.org/vaccineexemption

Do children in my school or child care with a religious exemption on file need a nonmedical exemption on March 1, 2014?

No, children in your school or child care who submitted documentation of a religious exemption to you prior to March 1, 2014, do not need to do not need to complete the new process for claiming a nonmedical exemption unless the parent chooses an exemption for vaccines that were not previously exempted.

Are religious exemptions claimed in one child care program prior to March 1, 2014, valid if a child moves to another child care on or after March 1?

No, records generally do not transfer between child care programs. A nonmedical exemption would be required.

Are religious exemptions claimed in a child care or Head Start prior to March 1, 2014, valid when a child enrolls in school on or after March 1?

No, parents of students enrolling in school in Oregon for the first time on or after March 1, 2014, will need to complete the new process to claim a nonmedical exemption, even if a religious exemption was on file at a child care or Head Start program previously.

Why is this law important?

Oregon has one of the highest exemption rates in the country. In the last decade, the annual rate of nonmedical exemptions for Oregon kindergartners has risen steadily from 2.4 percent in 2001-02 (first graders included) to 7 percent in 2013-14. Some counties in Oregon have kindergarten exemption rates as high as 15 percent, and some schools have exemption rates as high as 70%. This leaves communities vulnerable to diseases such as measles and pertussis.

Are healthcare practitioners required to provide vaccine education?

No. Healthcare practitioners can choose whether to provide education, or to refer parents and guardians to the online module.

What information is provided in the online vaccine education module?

What information will practitioners give to parents and guardians?

The online module discusses the benefits and risks of vaccination, the epidemiology, and the safety and efficacy of each school and child care-required vaccine.

Healthcare practitioners are required to provide information that is consistent with the information provided in the online module.

Will the vaccine education module be available in languages other than English?

Alternate formats will be available upon request. To request materials in an alternate format, call 971-673-0300.

Other questions?

Please contact the Oregon Immunization Program at (971) 673-0300, or visit our school immunization website at <http://1.usa.gov/OregonSchool>



OREGON PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION
Oregon Immunization Program



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