

Back-to-School Health Checklist

Recommended vaccinations: Children can get additional protection from the most current flu vaccination, and kids ages 5 and up can get the latest COVID-19 booster. The HPV vaccine, recommended for kids age 9 and older, can help prevent the leading cause of cervical, head and neck cancers.

Mandatory immunizations: These are required for schoolchildren in Illinois, so make sure to keep records. Check with your child's school to find out your district's deadlines

Pre-K students need proof of immunization for the following:

- Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap)
- Polio
- Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)
- Hepatitis B
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Pneumococcal series

Kindergarten students need proof of all pre-K immunizations plus additional doses of the following:

- Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap)
- Polio
- Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)
- Varicella (chicken pox)

Sixth-graders need proof of all previous immunizations plus:

- Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap) booster
- Meningococcal vaccine

High school seniors need proof of all previous immunizations plus:

- Two doses of Meningococcal vaccine, or one if the first dose is given after age 16

Annual checkup and sports physical

An annual checkup can let you know your child is healthy to start the school year. Students who play sports also need to get a sports physical, which is different from a regular checkup. It will help make sure your child is healthy enough to play.

Vision and hearing screenings

Your child may find it hard to learn if they can't see or hear their lessons well. It's important to get them tested so you can manage any changes in their vision or hearing. These screenings are also mandatory in Illinois before kids may enter kindergarten.

Dentist appointment

Kids should see the dentist every six months. Now is a good time to get it done and start the school year with a healthy smile. A dental exam is also required before entering kindergarten in Illinois.

Sleep schedule

Stay up late on long summer nights is fun, but get back to a bedtime routine before school starts. Children need nine to 12 hours of sleep each night between ages 6 and 12, and teens need eight to 10 hours of sleep.

Healthy eating

Studies show kids who get good nutrition learn better. Stock up on healthy breakfast, snack and lunch foods. Avoid added sugars and pack whole grains, fruits and veggies whenever possible.

Pack that backpack

Make sure your child has the supplies they need to stay safe and healthy.

A mask — While COVID restrictions have relaxed, there may be situations where they'll need a mask, especially if they're at risk for getting sick.

Hand sanitizer — Keeping their hands clean will help protect them from infectious diseases.

A water bottle — On hotter days, staying hydrated is extra important.

Sun protection — Sunglasses will help protect their vision, and sunscreen can prevent sunburns and skin cancer.

Update their school

Your child's school should have a record of any medicine they need to take, including allergy and asthma medication. Make sure they have your latest emergency contact information.



Your RUSH pediatric primary care physician can help you coordinate and make referrals for everything on your back to school health checklist.



Learn how to find a doctor and schedule an appointment for your child:



You can also learn more about our Family Medicine Services to schedule physicals and immunizations for all members of your family: