

School Law Nonmedical Exemptions: New Process Begins on March 1, 2014

(Updated February 26, 2014)

In 2013, Oregon passed legislation that changes the process for claiming a nonmedical exemption to school and childcare immunization requirements. This law goes into effect on March 1, 2014.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the new law change?

The new law requires parents or guardians who want to claim a nonmedical exemption to receive education about the benefits and risks of vaccination before 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.
2. View the online vaccine education module. At the end of the module, print a Vaccine Education Certificate.

The parent will turn in the Vaccine Education Certificate and a completed Certificate of Immunization Status to the child's school or childcare. The Certificate of Immunization Status is the official immunization record that the school or childcare maintains.

[Click here for a graphic of the process that parents will follow to claim a nonmedical exemption.](#)

Or visit: http://bit.ly/vaccine_and_imms

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

Are healthcare practitioners required to provide education to parents or guardians who want to claim a nonmedical exemption?

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 module? What information will healthcare 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 childcare-required vaccine.

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

What about students who already have exemptions on file at their schools?

If the religious exemption section of the Certificate of Immunization Status was signed prior to March 1, 2014, no action is needed. If the parent or guardian makes updates to the exemption already on file, he or she will need to complete the online module or receive education from a healthcare practitioner.

Can RNs or MAs provide education?

Education must be provided by an MD, DO, ND, NP, or PA.

RNs working under the direction of one of the above listed healthcare practitioners can also provide vaccine education.

Where is the online vaccine education module located?

The online module is available at: www.healthoregon.org/vaccineexemption

Will the online module be available in languages other than English?

Alternate formats will be available upon request. To request materials in an alternate format, contact Oregon Immunization Program at (971) 673-0300.

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 6.4 percent in 2012-13. Some counties in Oregon have kindergarten exemption rates as high as 15 percent, and some schools have exemption rates as high as 70 percent. This leaves communities vulnerable to diseases such as measles and pertussis.

Other questions?

Please contact the Oregon Immunization Program at (971) 673-0300, or visit our website at:

http://bit.ly/vaccine_and_imms



This document can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request this publication in another format or language, contact the Public Health Division at 971-673-1222, 971-673-0372 for TTY.