



## Catawba County Public Health

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[www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth](http://www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth)  
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### THINK ABOUT SCHOOL ENTRY VACCINES NOW, NOT WHILE ON VACATION

HICKORY, N.C. – Is your family preparing for summer vacations? Before you go, consider checking with your child’s medical provider to ensure your child is caught up on immunizations.

With the rush to prepare for school in July and August, immunizations aren’t always at the forefront of our minds. By getting them done early – before vacations begin and summer flies by – last-minute appointments for shots will be one less thing parents have to worry about.

Vaccinations may not seem important when you’re on a beach, lounging by a pool, visiting with Mickey Mouse or enjoying the mountain scenery, but they’re protecting children and families every day from diseases such as diphtheria, measles, pertussis (whooping cough), polio and more.

Because vaccines prevent disease so well, some parents may not know some of the serious diseases they prevent; however, those diseases do still circulate. Within the last few years, a mumps outbreak hit neighboring Iredell county, and Catawba County investigated a pertussis case last year.

Children who are entering child care or school environments are more at risk for coming in contact with a vaccine-preventable disease, making vaccinations before entrance a critical step for parents to take. Not having required vaccinations can delay a child’s entry into child care or kindergarten, as vaccinations are required within the first 30 days of school. Rising seventh-graders must also have a dose of the Tdap vaccine, which covers tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, as well as one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine prior to the start of seventh grade.

The goal is to provide children with immunity early in life, before they are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases. Vaccines protect against diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough (pertussis), haemophilus influenzae type b, polio, pneumococcal, rotavirus, influenza, chickenpox, hepatitis B, hepatitis A, and measles, mumps and rubella.

Despite the benefits of vaccines, they can be expensive for some families. North Carolina’s Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides vaccines to children who are underinsured or whose parents or guardians may not be able to afford them. The free, state-supplied vaccines are provided to children who are Medicaid eligible, uninsured, American Indian or Alaska Native, or whose insurance will not cover the vaccines for various reasons. To find out if your child qualifies, ask your child’s doctor or call Catawba County Public Health at (828) 695-5800.

For more information on required vaccinations, go to [www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth/Immunize/childhoodImmunizations.asp](http://www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth/Immunize/childhoodImmunizations.asp).

Catawba County Public Health, located off Fairgrove Church Road behind Catawba Valley Medical Center in

*“Leading the Way to a Healthier Community”*



Hickory, N.C., works to protect and promote the health of all county residents. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit [www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth](http://www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth).

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