

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

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State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS FREE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOTS AT SPECIAL CLINICS

Department offering vaccines at two Back to School Bash events and special Ocala clinics to help get children ready to start school on time

OCALA—The Florida Department of Health in Marion County is offering special back-to-school immunization clinics in August to help students get ready for school, with the first event scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 1.

“Vaccines provide the best defense to protect you and your family from the spread of infectious diseases,” said Jan Stepp, Immunization Clinic supervisor for the Florida Department of Health in Marion County. “We want to give parents every opportunity to get their kids ready for the school year by taking advantage of our immunization services before school starts.”

The Department will offer free school vaccinations at three Marion County locations:

- The **Sparr Baptist Church Back to School Bash**. The event is scheduled for **9 a.m.–1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 1 at Sparr Baptist Church**, 1303 E. Highway 329 in Citra. In addition to school immunizations, the event includes school physicals, sports physicals, vision screening and more. For information on the church event, call 352-622-4317.
- The **Marion County Children’s Alliance Back-to-School Bash**. The event is scheduled for **10 a.m.–1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 8 at the E.D. Croskey Recreation Center**, 1510 NW 4th St. in Ocala. In addition to school immunizations, the event includes school physicals, vision and hearing screenings, child IDs, backpacks, school supplies and more. For information on the event, call 352-438-5993.
- The health department has scheduled special back-to-school immunization clinics **8 a.m.–4 p.m. weekdays Aug. 3–18 at the department’s Ocala facility**, 1801 SE 32nd Avenue. No appointment is needed, and the immunizations are free for those ages 18 and younger. Parents should bring their child’s immunization records if they have them.

New health requirements mean that children may need an additional polio vaccination before they can enter kindergarten. Students entering seventh grade need the tetanus diphtheria and acellular pertussis—Tdap—booster. Students in higher grades may also need the Tdap booster. Some other vaccination requirements include:

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- Kindergarten through seventh grade: two doses of the varicella vaccine.
- Grades eight through 12: one dose of the varicella vaccine.
- Students entering a Florida school for the first time: two doses of the measles, mumps and rubella—MMR—vaccine.

Immunizations are free for people ages 18 and younger and no appointment is needed.

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