KidsData

POWERED BY PRB

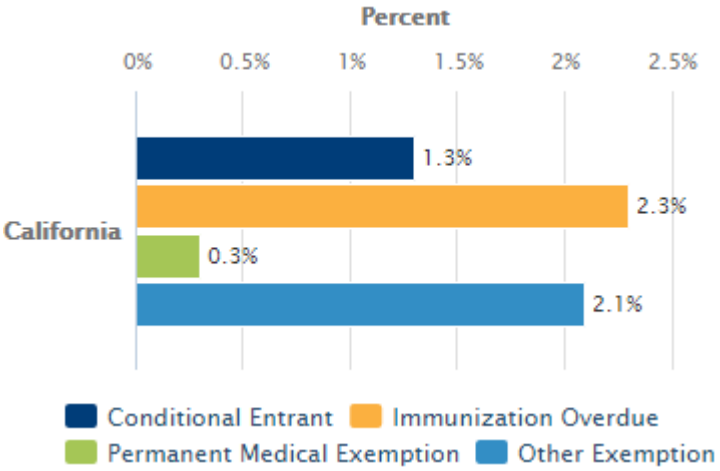
Immunizations in California

Percentage of Kindergartners with All Required Immunizations: 2022

Locations	Percent
California	94.0%
Alameda County	95.1%
Contra Costa County	95.1%
Fresno County	95.6%
Kern County	88.2%
Los Angeles County	94.3%
Orange County	96.0%
Riverside County	93.8%
Sacramento County	92.7%
San Bernardino County	92.1%
San Diego County	93.3%
Santa Clara County	96.5%

Definition: Percentage of children in kindergarten with all required immunizations (e.g., in 2022, 94% of California kindergarteners had all required immunizations).
Data Source: California Dept. of Public Health, Immunization Branch, Reporting Data for Kindergarten and 7th Grade (Nov. 2024).

Percentage of Kindergartners with Immunization Exemptions, by Exemption Type: 2022



Definition: Number of children in kindergarten with immunization exemptions, by exemption type (e.g., in 2022, 0.3% of California kindergarteners had permanent medical exemptions from immunization).
Data Source: California Dept. of Public Health, Immunization Branch, Reporting Data for Kindergarten and 7th Grade (Nov. 2024).

Pertussis Infections per 100,000 Californians

What It Is

On kidsdata.org, immunizations are measured by the number and percentage of kindergartners who receive all required immunizations by the time they enter school, along with the number and percentage of kindergartners who are exempt from immunization requirements, by type of exemption.

Also provided are numbers and rates of reported cases of vaccine-preventable childhood diseases—diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B (acute), measles, meningococcal disease, mumps, pertussis, polio, rubella, tetanus, and varicella—in the total population.

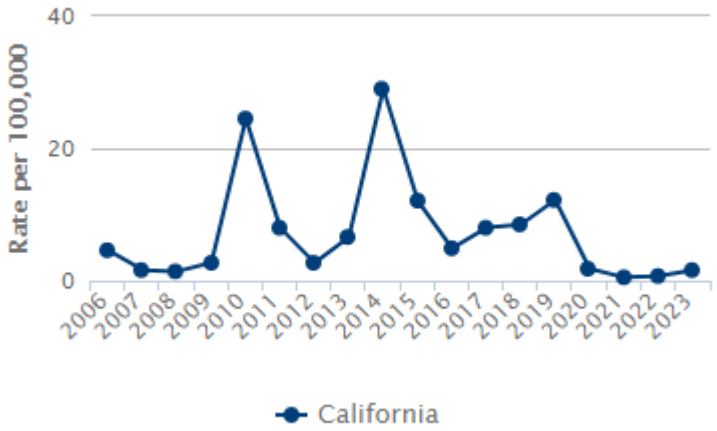
Why This Topic Is Important

Immunizations are among the most successful and cost-effective preventive health care interventions, protecting millions of children worldwide from serious and potentially fatal infectious diseases. For U.S. children born between 1994 and 2023 who receive recommended vaccinations, it is estimated that more than 1.1 million lives will be saved and 500 million illnesses prevented, at a net savings of nearly $2.7 trillion in direct and indirect social costs. Current immunization schedules recommend that children receive vaccinations for diseases such as measles, mumps, whooping cough (pertussis), polio, chickenpox (varicella), and hepatitis. Annual immunization against influenza also is recommended. Vaccinations are important for the protection of the individual child as well as for the protection of others with whom an infected child might come into contact, as most vaccine-preventable diseases are spread through air or direct contact.

Vaccine hesitancy—identified by the World Health Organization among its top public health threats—has been linked to an increase in vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks in the U.S. Equitable access to vaccines is another major issue, with U.S. data showing persistent disparities in children's vaccination coverage by region, income level, health insurance status, and race/ethnicity.

How Children Are Faring

In 2022, 94% of California's more than 500,000 kindergarten students had received all doses of required vaccines—diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTP); measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR); hepatitis B; polio; and varicella—prior to entering school. This figure is up from 92.8% in 2021 and approaches pre-pandemic levels (94.3% in the 2019-20 school year).



Definition: Number of reported cases of vaccine-preventable childhood diseases per 100,000 population, by disease (e.g., in 2023, there were 1.6 cases of pertussis (whooping cough) per 100,000 Californians).
Data Source: California Dept. of Public Health, Immunization Branch, Vaccine Preventable Disease Cases by County and Year; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System, Notifiable Infectious Disease Data Tables; California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates and Projections (Nov. 2024).

Of the more than 30,000 kindergarteners statewide who had not received all required immunizations in 2022, fewer than 1 in 20 (1,511) were permanently exempt from one or more immunizations due to their physical condition or medical circumstances.

At the county level, there is wide variation in rates of kindergarten immunization. For example, more than 97% of kindergarteners in Colusa and Monterey were fully vaccinated in 2022, compared with fewer than 80% in El Dorado and Sutter—two counties with high proportions of kindergarteners with "other exemptions" available to those receiving instruction through an individualized education program (IEP), home-based private school, or non-classroom-based independent study program.

In 2023, 1,079 cases of vaccine-preventable childhood diseases—hepatitis A, hepatitis B (acute), measles, meningococcal disease, mumps, pertussis, tetanus, and varicella (hospitalizations and deaths only)—were reported to the state department of public health. Pertussis (whooping cough) accounts for a majority of infections reported each year—643 (60%) in 2023, a rate of 1.6 cases per 100,000 Californians of all ages. These figures are down from 2019, when there were 4,849 cases—12.2 per 100,000 Californians. Statewide rates of pertussis in the total population peaked in 2014 (29 cases per 100,000) and 2010 (24.5 cases per 100,000). Pertussis outbreaks are cyclic, with peaks every three to five years.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic: https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/53/immunizations/summary