

New York rejects federal vaccine overhaul as flu cases soar

[New York upholds existing childhood vaccine requirements](#) (Original article source)

New York State will maintain its current childhood vaccination rules for school and day care, rejecting new federal recommendations to reduce shots for kids. The CDC's overhaul of the national vaccination schedule means that shots for the flu, COVID, hepatitis A, rotavirus, and meningococcal disease are no longer routinely recommended for all children. The new guidance also tweaks recommendations for the Human Papillomavirus vaccine, pushing one dose instead of two. Federal officials argue that the U.S. was an outlier that required too many doses, compared to other developed countries.

by: [Johan Sheridan](#)

Posted: Jan 8, 2026 / 03:24 PM EST

Updated: Jan 8, 2026 / 03:24 PM EST

ALBANY, N.Y. (NEXSTAR) — New York State will keep its current childhood vaccination rules for school and day care in place, rejecting new federal recommendations to reduce shots for kids. State health officials confirmed the decision Tuesday, just one day after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention overhauled the national vaccination schedule during a record-breaking influenza season.

New York State Department of Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald cited a lack of new safety data to support any changes to current state recommendations. “New York State’s long-standing, childhood vaccine requirements remain the same,” he said. “New Yorkers can continue to be confident that vaccines offer the best protection from preventable childhood diseases.”

Coming from President Donald Trump and Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the changes mean that shots for flu, COVID, hepatitis A, rotavirus, and meningococcal disease are no longer routinely recommended for all children. The overhaul also eliminates the hep B dose given to newborns, recommending the shot only if the mother tests positive for the virus.

But New York still requires children to be vaccinated against hep B and meningococcal disease—along with diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and chickenpox—to attend school or day care.

The new guidance also tweaks recommendations for the Human Papillomavirus vaccine, pushing one dose instead of two. The CDC said recent scientific studies demonstrated that a single HPV shot is as effective.

Federal officials argue that the U.S. was an outlier that required too many doses, compared to other developed countries. The Trump administration found that, for example, Germany recommended vaccinations for 15 diseases, Japan recommends 14, and Denmark recommends only 10.

The CDC reduced recommended vaccinations from 18 diseases down to 11. Federal officials also argued that, despite requiring twice as many doses as they do in parts of Europe, the U.S. has lower vaccination rates.

The CDC now tells families to decide on vaccinations based on doctor's orders and individual risk factors like local disease transmission and personal health history. The new schedule is supposed to focus on serious diseases while maintaining parental choice.

According to federal officials, the overhaul addresses declining trust in health institutions, which dropped from 72% to 40% between 2020 and 2024. To rebuild confidence, HHS committed to funding "gold standard" science, including double-blind, placebo-controlled randomized trials to evaluate long-term outcomes.

"No family will lose access," said Dr. Mehmet Oz, the Administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. "This framework empowers parents and physicians to make individualized decisions based on risk, while maintaining strong protection against serious disease."

But advocacy groups like Let's Get Immunized NY warned that the confusion will damage public trust in medical experts. They want parents to stick to the old schedule so there are no outbreaks at schools. "Today's announcement that some of these very vaccines will not be routinely recommended is extremely worrisome for the future of New York children and the public health in general," the organization said in a statement.

Plus, a comparison with vaccination schedules in Western European countries might not be fair. They tend to have a much more robust social safety net to deal with hospitalizations, like universal healthcare, guaranteed medical follow-ups, maternal leave, and prenatal screening that yields selective, targeted vaccinations. Without that infrastructure, the stripped-down schedule could overwhelm American hospitals with preventable diseases.

In New York, the vaccines in question are not only still recommended, but supposed to be free for families. Insurance companies and federal programs still have to cover all shots

that were previously on the list—including those now considered optional or high-risk by the feds—without charging copays.

Meanwhile, the state is already dealing with a severe spike in respiratory illness. DOH reported a record number of weekly flu hospitalizations on January 2, with 4,546 people admitted in a single week. “We are having a more severe flu season than prior years,” McDonald said. “Almost 1,000 more people were admitted to a hospital during this most recent 7-day period compared to the prior week.”

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, a New York Democrat, said the “nonsensical” changes to the recommended vaccination schedule ignore science and endanger children. “In the midst of an increasingly severe flu season, this new vaccine schedule removes the recommendation that all children get the flu vaccine, along with those for other deadly diseases like COVID and bacterial meningitis,” she said.