



# COMMUNITY IMMUNITY TOOLKIT

*Voices for Vaccines*

## DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE IMMUNITY?

Inform, inspire, and motivate the members of your community in order to reach high vaccination rates and protect all those around you.

### Voices for Vaccines

Parents Speaking Up for Immunization

# Community Immunity:

Just another way to speak up for immunization

Special thanks is given Voices for Vaccines' Parent Advisory Board in the development of this toolkit. This toolkit was reviewed by Voices for Vaccines' Scientific Advisory Board.

To calculate herd immunity thresholds, we referenced:

**Vaccines, 6th Edition** Edited by Stanley Plotkin, Walter Orenstein, and Paul A. Offit. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier, 2013.

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# How to Use the Community Immunity Toolkit.

## Are you a daycare, school, a community program leader?

Whether your immunization rates are high and you'd like to celebrate them or they are low enough to invite disease into your community, the parents and students in your community deserve to know what those rates are. Some communities will have concerning rates for a particular disease and might choose to use the percentage chart to highlight the difference. Others will simply want to post the overall vaccination rates and will choose to color in the thermometer chart.

Whichever chart you use, post it in several places around your building or photocopy and send it home with students or program participants. Be sure to alert parents to the rates in your community's newsletter. Tell them why your community values vaccination and where they can find the chart.

Once parents are aware of the immunization rates in their community, many are bound to have questions. The Voices for Vaccines website has information about vaccines ([www.voicesforvaccines.org/vaccines](http://www.voicesforvaccines.org/vaccines)) and suggestions for parents about having conversations about vaccines ([www.voicesforvaccines.org/tools](http://www.voicesforvaccines.org/tools)). Before you publish these rates, you may want to have a phone number answered by a public health official or local doctor who is willing to field questions and support your community's desire to protect its children against preventable disease. You do not have to answer questions you cannot answer, but you may need to help parents find the best information.

## Are you a concerned parent?

Ask for a meeting with your community administrator, school nurse, or parent-teacher association, and express a desire to protect all children against vaccine-preventable disease. Many states require schools to publicly disclose their immunization rates, but those numbers might not mean much to parents when given out of context. Showing how high your immunization rates are, and how much higher they can go, brings that context and understanding.

Also, consider writing a letter to your neighborhood or local paper highlighting your school or daycare's immunization rates and emphasizing that you vaccinate your children to protect them and to protect your community. You call on other parents to join you and to do the same.

# Find Your Immunization Rates.

School nurses and administrators are fantastic allies in getting the good word out about protecting your community from preventable disease. Approaching them in a positive, friendly way might be the easiest way to find out your community's immunization rates.

Several states also require schools to publicly disclose vaccination rates, and those rates are often available online.

California: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/pages/immunizationlevels.aspx>

Illinois: <http://schools.chicagotribune.com/immunization/>

Louisiana: <http://www.myajc.com/news/local-education/georgia-school-vaccination-rates-2014/#6358683f.3727907.735530>

Minnesota: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/immunize/stats/school/index.html>

New York (private): <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2014/03/some-nyc-schools-show-dismal-vaccination-rates.html>

Vermont: <http://healthvermont.gov/hc/imm/ImmSurv.aspx>

Washington: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/Immunization/SchoolReports>

\*If your state publishes school-specific immunization rates and is not listed here, please contact us at [info@voicesforvaccines.org](mailto:info@voicesforvaccines.org)

# Does Our Community Have Immunity?

Vaccines protect an individual child or adult from catching a potentially serious disease. When enough people in a community are vaccinated against a disease, those who are vaccinated can provide a shield of protection for those who cannot be vaccinated. This shield helps reduce the likelihood that anyone in the community will catch a vaccine-preventable disease. This phenomenal shield is known as community immunity or herd immunity. For each disease a particular percentage of the population must be vaccinated in order to keep it at bay.

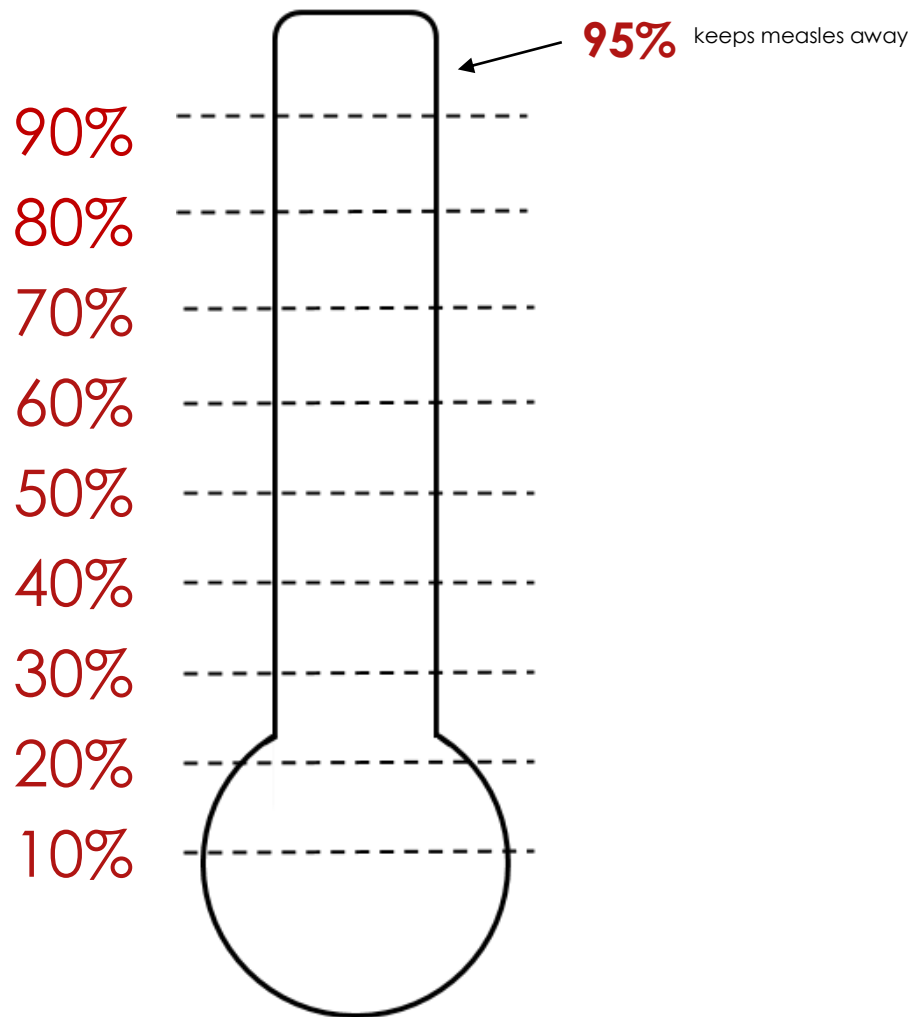
So how does our community stack up?

Disease	About the disease	Community Immunity Threshold	Our Vaccination Rate
<b>Measles</b>	Before the vaccine was introduced, 100,000 children were hospitalized and approximately 500 children died from measles each year in the U.S.	<b>95%</b>	
<b>Mumps</b>	Before the vaccine was introduced, mumps was a major cause of deafness in the U.S. It can also lead to male infertility.	<b>86%</b>	
<b>Polio</b>	Polio virus can cause temporary or permanent paralysis. While polio has been eliminated from the U.S., it is still endemic elsewhere in the world, and is only a plane ride away.	<b>95%</b>	
<b>Chickenpox (Varicella)</b>	Before the vaccine was introduced, about 10,000 people were hospitalized and 100 people died each year in the U.S. from chickenpox complications.	<b>90%</b>	

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# Let's Talk Community Immunity.

We value vaccination in our community.

When a child enters school, daycare, or other community-based programs, we ask his or her parents to bring immunization forms with them. Doing so ensures that children are protected against dangerous diseases like measles, polio, meningitis, and pneumonia.

Some children cannot be vaccinated because of medical conditions. Rarely, children are vaccinated, but the vaccine is not completely effective leaving them vulnerable to disease. And other children have parents who have not vaccinated them for financial, personal, or philosophical reasons. All of these children are at risk for catching and transmitting diseases we can prevent.

Most diseases we vaccinate against have an **immunity threshold** in communities. When enough people in a community are vaccinated against a particular disease, the chances that community members will contract that are decreased.

As a community full of people who care about one another and who are willing to take extra steps to ensure that we all do well, we strive to keep our immunization rates high.

Please take a few minutes to review our community immunity rates. Let's think of ways to get these rates high and to keep them that way. Check your family's immunization records, and see your doctor if you have more questions.