

# Immunization of school children in Halton (2024-25)

## Health indicator report

### Background

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- Immunization is one of the best ways to protect our community from vaccine-preventable diseases. The *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA) requires Ontario students attending school to be immunized against diphtheria; tetanus; polio; measles; mumps; rubella; pertussis (whooping cough); meningococcal disease; and varicella (chickenpox, for children born in 2010 or later).<sup>1</sup>
- Under the ISPA, students can be suspended from school if their immunization records at their local health department show that they are overdue for vaccination and they do not have a valid exemption.<sup>2,3</sup>
- The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of compliance with the ISPA for the 2024-25 school year among Halton students. The report focuses on students born in 2017 (ages 7 or 8) and 2008 (ages 16 or 17).
- This report also highlights the proportion of students born in 2012 (ages 12 or 13) who completed the vaccine series for meningococcal disease, human papillomavirus (HPV), and hepatitis B by the end of the 2024-25 school year. The Ministry of Health mandates the Health Department to offer these three vaccines to all grade seven students in Halton schools, free of charge.<sup>4</sup>

### Key findings

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- Compliance is high for students born in 2008 (94%) and 2017 (91%) due to enforcement of reporting requirements in the 2024-25 school year.
- Of the three vaccines available to grade seven students, the vaccine to protect against meningococcal disease had the highest completion rate (83%), and the vaccine to protect against HPV had the lowest completion rate (57%).
- The vaccine to protect against HPV continues to have a higher completion rate among females (59%) compared to males (56%), but the gap is narrowing.

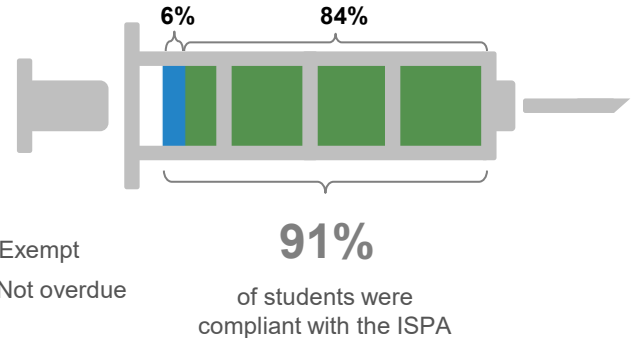


# ISPA compliance, ages 7 or 8

## Overall

- By the end of the 2024-25 school year, the percentage of students fully in compliance with the ISPA was high for students aged seven or eight (91%).
- The compliance rate is high because the Health Department carried out a complete ISPA enforcement process for grade 2 students during the 2024-25 school year (including sending reminders, offering catch-up clinics, and ultimately suspending students who remained non-compliant).

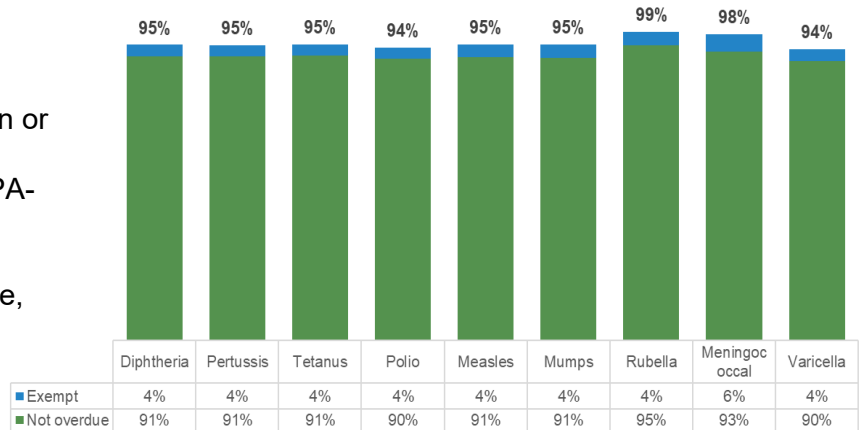
**ISPA compliant** means that the student was not overdue for any immunizations required by the ISPA, or had a valid exemption, as of July 1, 2025.



Percentage of students in compliance with the ISPA, seven or eight years of age, Halton Region, 2024-25

## Disease

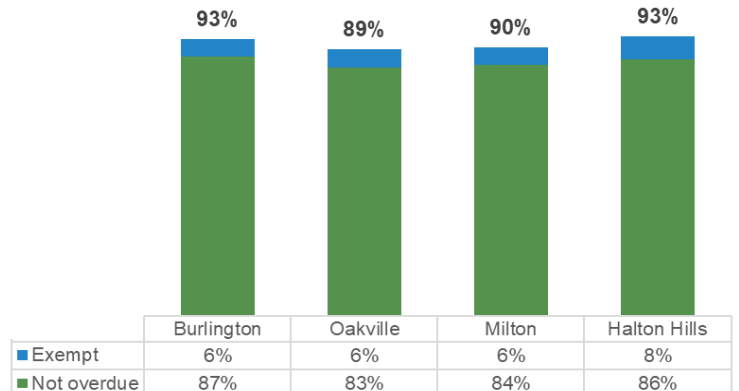
- Compliance rates for students aged seven or eight were high (94% or higher) for all individual vaccines protecting against ISPA-required diseases.
- Most compliant students were not overdue, with only a small percentage having an exemption.



Percentage of students in compliance with the IPISA, by disease, seven or eight years of age, Halton Region, 2024-25

## Municipality

- Overall ISPA compliance rates were highest among students attending school in Halton Hills and Burlington. This difference was **statistically significant** when comparing Halton Hills to Oakville or Milton, and when comparing Burlington to Oakville or Milton.



Percentage of students in compliance with the ISPA, by school municipality, seven or eight years of age, Halton Region, 2024-25

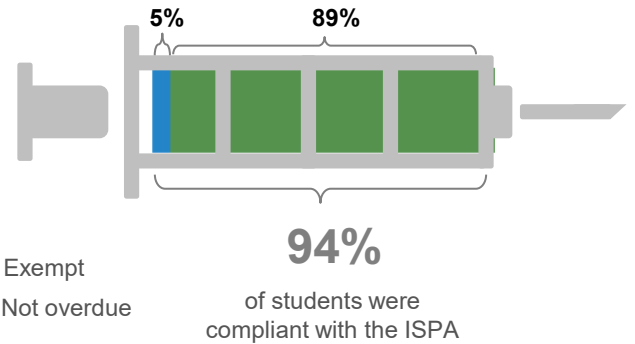


# ISPA compliance, ages 16 or 17

## Overall

- By the end of the 2024-25 school year, the percentage of students fully in compliance with the ISPA was 94% for students aged 16 or 17.
- The compliance rate is high because the Health Department carried out a complete ISPA enforcement process for high school students during the 2024-25 school year (including sending reminders, offering catch-up clinics, and ultimately suspending students who remained non-compliant).

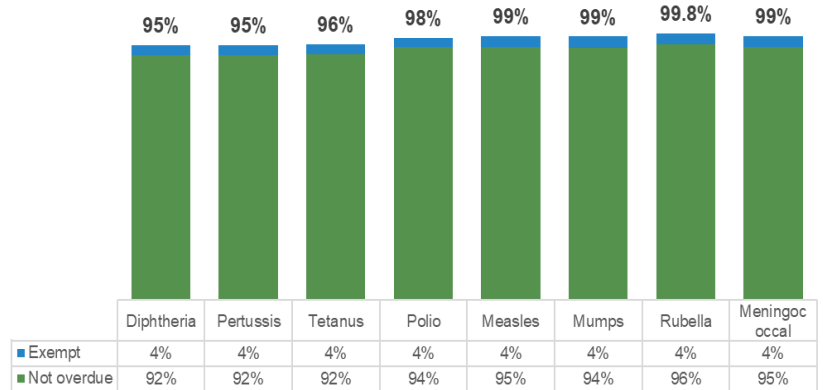
**ISPA compliant** means that the student was not overdue for any immunizations required by the ISPA, or had a valid exemption, as of July 1, 2025.



Percentage of students in compliance with the ISPA, 16 or 17 years of age, Halton Region, 2024-25

## Disease

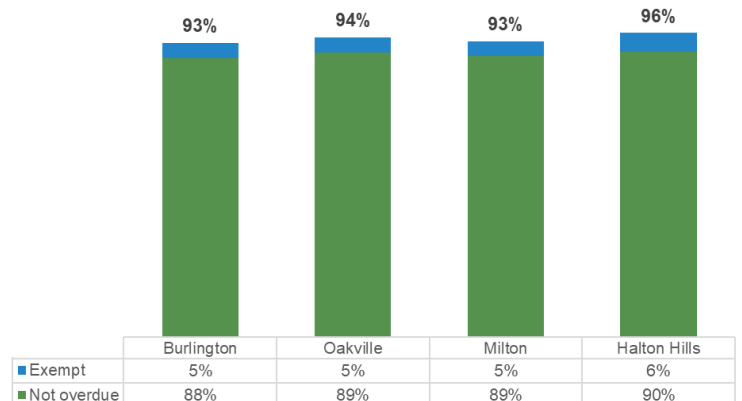
- Compliance rates for students aged 16 or 17 were high (95% or higher) for all individual vaccines protecting against ISPA-required diseases.
- Most compliant students were not overdue, with only a small percentage having an exemption.



Percentage of students in compliance with the IPISA, by disease, 16 or 17 years of age, Halton Region, 2024-25

## Municipality

- ISPA compliance rates were highest among students attending school in Halton Hills. This difference was **statistically significant** only when comparing Halton Hills to Burlington or Milton.



Percentage of students in compliance with the ISPA, by school municipality, 16 or 17 years of age, Halton Region, 2024-25

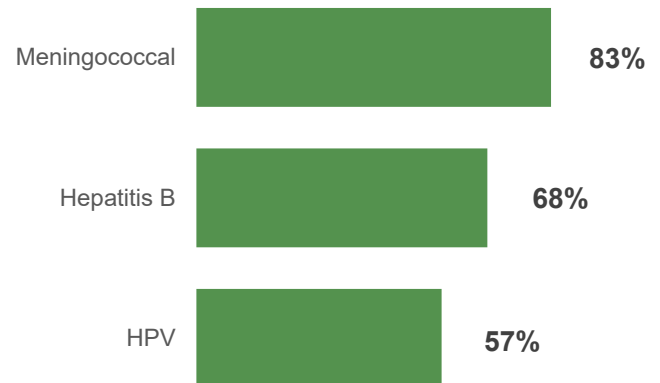


# Grade seven vaccination

## Disease

- At the end of the 2024-25 school year, the vaccine to protect against meningococcal disease had the highest completion rate (83%) among students aged 12 or 13, followed by vaccines to protect against hepatitis B (68%) and HPV (57%).
- Completion may be higher for the vaccine to protect against meningococcal disease because this vaccination is required under the ISPA. The vaccine to protect against meningococcal disease also requires only one dose for completion, whereas the vaccines to protect against hepatitis B and HPV currently require two doses each.

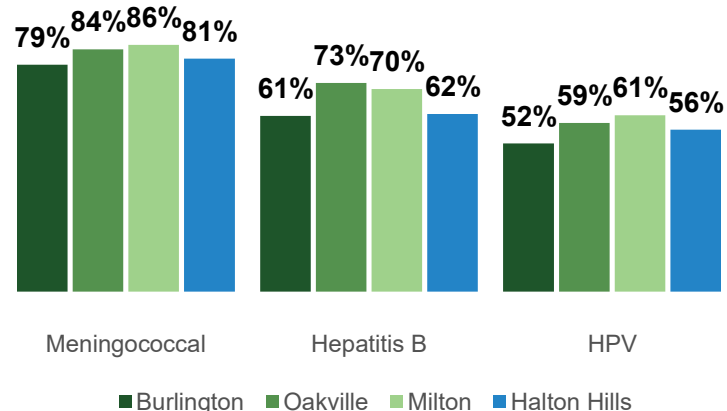
**Completion** means that the student received all doses of vaccine required for protection against a given disease by July 1, 2025, with all doses being valid (i.e. administered at the right time).



Percentage of students completing vaccine series, by disease, 12 or 13 years of age, Halton Region, 2024-25

## Municipality

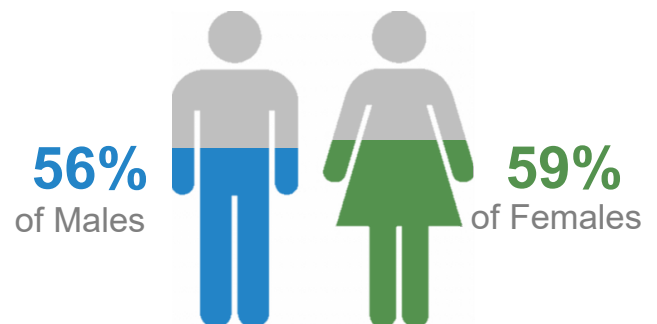
- Meningococcal vaccination completion was highest among students attending school in Milton. This difference was **statistically significant** when comparing Milton to Burlington or Halton Hills.
- Hepatitis B vaccination completion was highest among students attending school in Oakville. This difference was **statistically significant** when comparing Oakville to Burlington or Halton Hills.
- HPV vaccination completion was highest among students attending school in Milton. This difference was **statistically significant** when comparing Milton to Burlington or Halton Hills.



Percentage of students completing vaccine series, by school municipality and disease, 12 or 13 years of age, Halton Region, 2024-25

## Sex (HPV)

- A greater proportion of females completed the vaccination series for HPV compared to males, but this difference was not statistically significant.



Percentage of students completing vaccine series for HPV, by sex, 12 or 13 years of age, Halton Region, 2024-25

# Data notes

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## Definitions:

**Compliant** means a student is not overdue or has an exemption for each vaccine protecting against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and meningococcal disease for students born in 2008; or for vaccines protecting against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal disease, and varicella for students born in 2017.

Students are considered compliant for a particular disease or combination of diseases if they have any forecast status other than 'overdue' in Panorama for that disease or combination of diseases, or if they have a valid exemption on file.

**Completion** means that the student received all doses of vaccine required for protection, with all doses being valid (i.e. administered at the right time).

Students are considered to have completed the series for a particular disease if they do not have a forecast status for the disease in Panorama, unless they have an exemption.

## Limitations:

Students are considered complete for a school-based vaccine if they have no forecast status in Panorama for that disease, indicating that they have finished the vaccine series appropriately and require no further vaccination for immunity. Students with an exemption for a school-based vaccine were not considered complete despite having no forecast status. Students who completed the vaccine series despite having an exemption, or who have an exemption due to natural immunity, were not taken into account and were assumed not to have completed the series.

Note that students technically do not require an exemption for the vaccine protecting against hepatitis B as it is not required by the ISPA, but some students have one recorded because broad exemptions for all vaccines were carried over from a previous system (IRIS).

Students attending "virtual" schools (<5 students) were excluded from the analysis by municipality, since virtual schools do not have a municipality assigned to them. However, these students were included when calculating all other rates.

Compliance and completion rates were based on the best information available to the Halton Region Health Department. It is possible that some students considered non-compliant have actually received their vaccines, but their parents have not reported the vaccines to the Health Department.

Compliance is not equivalent to coverage. Children with an exemption are ISPA-compliant, but they are often not immune to the diseases for which they are exempt from vaccination. Similarly, children who are due for vaccination are ISPA-compliant as long as they are not yet overdue, but they may no longer be immune.

Children in the "Exempt" category may have a medical, philosophical, or administrative exemption. Administrative exemptions are placed by Public Health to consider as valid doses given slightly outside of the vaccine schedule (e.g. a dose of MMR given two days before a child's first birthday). Excluding administrative exemptions, the majority of exemptions are philosophical, with only a small percentage being medical.

This report includes only children attending schools in Halton as of July 1, 2025; these children may not reside in Halton, and some children who do reside in Halton may attend school elsewhere. Municipality is based on the school location.

Percentages may not sum due to rounding.

**Data Source:** Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Panorama and Panorama Enhanced Analytical Reporting Tool, extracted July 1, 2025.

## References

1. Ontario. Ministry of Health. 2025. Vaccines for children at school. Accessed July 2025 from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines-children-school>
2. General, RRO 1990, Reg 645. Accessed July 2025 from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900645>
3. Immunization of School Pupils Act, RSO 1990, c I.1. Accessed July 2025 from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90i01>
4. Ontario. Ministry of Health. 2025. Ontario's routine immunization schedule. Accessed July 2025 from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-routine-immunization-schedule>

For more health indicator and health status reports, visit the Halton Health Statistics webpage at [halton.ca](https://www.halton.ca).