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US Vaccination Exemptions Reach Record High

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported a slight decline in kindergarten vaccination coverage across the United States during the 2024–2025 school year, with exemption rates rising to an all-time high.

According to data released last week, national coverage among kindergartners dropped slightly for all key childhood vaccines. The vaccination rate for the diphtheria, tetanus, and

acellular pertussis (DTaP) vaccine fell to 92.1%, while the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) and polio vaccines each saw coverage rates of 92.5%. These numbers reflect a continued downward trend in childhood immunization rates.

At the same time, the rate of exemptions from one or more vaccines climbed to 3.6%, up from 3.3% the previous year. This marks the highest level of exemptions recorded in CDC history for kindergartners.

Health experts have raised concerns about the implications of these trends. Dr. Jesse Hackell, chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on the Pediatric Workforce, warned that reduced vaccination coverage may place children at risk for preventable diseases.

“No child should suffer illness or death from a disease that we can prevent,” Dr. Hackell told FOX 5. “We really try to emphasize that vaccines are safe and effective, and the benefits far outweigh the minimal risks.”

The CDC, in a written statement, acknowledged the updated data but emphasized that the majority of American children continue to receive standard vaccinations. “Vaccination remains the most effective way to protect children from serious diseases like measles and whooping cough, which can lead to hospitalization and long-term health complications,” the agency stated.

While reaffirming that the decision to vaccinate is personal, the CDC encouraged parents to consult healthcare professionals to make informed choices. The agency added that it is continuing to monitor vaccination trends nationwide and support local and state efforts to promote vaccine access and education.

Local health departments are also ramping up their efforts. In Maryland, officials launched a social media campaign to raise awareness, and Governor Wes Moore declared August “Immunization Awareness Month” to encourage parents to vaccinate their children before the school year begins.

Despite concerns from health authorities, the issue remains sensitive, as vaccination policies intersect with parental rights, state regulations, and broader discussions around healthcare autonomy.