



# BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Berrien County Health Department Provides Back-to-School Checklist for Parents**

**Benton Harbor, Michigan, Aug. 16, 2022** – As children prepare to go back to school, the Berrien County Health Department is providing parents a checklist that goes beyond classroom supplies.

The BCHD is dedicated to ensuring a healthy and successful return to the classroom, recommending children are up to date on the following:

- Immunizations against infectious diseases, such as measles, chickenpox, whooping cough and hepatitis B, which are required by state law.
- Hearing and vision screenings, which are required by state law for all children entering kindergarten
- Dental screenings, which will be required by state law by 2023 for children entering kindergarten.
- Blood lead screening, which can be done through a pediatrician or at the Berrien County Health Department.
- Sports physical to keep an updated health history and identify any medical issues commonly seen in children who participate in athletics.

“As parents prepare children for the upcoming school year, we want to make sure their back-to-school list goes beyond notebooks and backpacks,” Health Officer Guy Miller said. “The Berrien County Health Department works to support parents and teachers by helping to create a safe and healthy transition back to the classroom, protecting

children, minimizing disease outbreaks and providing children the best opportunity for in-person education.”

Parents should follow these recommended [vaccine schedules](#) for individuals 18 years old and younger.

The BCHD provides free hearing and vision screenings for preschool and school-aged children throughout Berrien County. Children entering school with undiagnosed hearing or vision problems often have trouble learning, including reading or hearing instructions. For more information about the BCHD’s hearing and vision screenings and to schedule an appointment, visit [berriencounty.org/634/hearing-vision-screening](http://berriencounty.org/634/hearing-vision-screening).

Blood lead screenings are important for children because their bodies absorb lead more easily than adults. Children younger than 6 are at the highest risk for elevated blood lead levels, which can harm their growth, behavior and ability to learn.

Most exposure to lead is from paint dust, paint chips and soil contaminated with lead. Lead can also enter the body by drinking or cooking with water containing lead. Screenings for blood lead levels are as simple as a finger prick to ensure that there is no detection of elevated levels of lead in their blood. Schedule a screening through the child’s health care provider or call the BCHD at 269.926.7121.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends sports physicals be conducted annually by a health care provider to ensure children are fully prepared to safely participate in athletics.

For more information about the BCHD’s services, visit [bchdmi.org](http://bchdmi.org) or call 269.926.7121.

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