



Department of Public Health (DPH)

Preteen Vaccine Week

Department of Public Health

California's preteens include more than one million 11 and 12 year-old boys and girls. The goals of 2015's Preteen Vaccine Week campaign are to raise awareness about California's Tdap requirement for incoming 7th grade students, immunization recommendations for 11 and 12 year-olds, and to promote the preteen doctor visit.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) currently recommends that both boys and girls, 11-12 years receive the following vaccines: Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis), HPV (human papillomavirus), Meningococcal, Influenza (flu) and also Chickenpox (Varicella) for those preteens who have not received two doses.

The Tdap vaccine protects against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). One dose of Tdap is routinely given at age 11 or 12 years. California Assembly Bill 354 requires that 7th grade students are immunized with Tdap before starting school.

HPV is a common virus in the US. HPV is spread by skin-to-skin contact during any type of sexual activity with another person. The HPV vaccine is recommended for both boys and girls, 11-12 years because the vaccine works best before infection with the virus. It is recommended that preteens and teens get all 3 doses of the HPV vaccine series long before their first sexual contact. The vaccine prevents HPV infection, it does not cure it.

Meningococcal disease is a rare but serious infection in the blood or areas around the brain and spinal cord. About 10% of teens who get the disease die from it, and another 15% will have long-term disability from it such as: loss of limb(s), deafness, nervous system problems, or brain damage. Meningococcal is spread through close contact, such as kissing, coughing, sharing drinks and lip balm. One dose of meningococcal vaccine is recommended for all 11-12 year-olds. A booster dose is recommended at age 16 years.

Flu (influenza) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Flu can send even healthy kids to the hospital. Preteens should get a flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available in their community.

Some preteens may also need to catch up on other immunizations, including varicella, as many do not have their second dose. Chickenpox is a very contagious disease caused by the varicella virus. It is especially dangerous for adolescents. It can lead to severe skin infections, scars, pneumonia, brain damage, infertility and even death. A total of two doses of the varicella vaccine is recommended for those who have not had chickenpox disease. It is important that preteens are screened for both doses to help ensure proper immunity.

Preteen Vaccine Week promotes the importance of immunizations among preteens and highlights their doctor visit as an opportunity for them to receive vaccines that can protect them from very



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serious, yet preventable diseases. Be sure to contribute to the cause and screen preteens for all ACIP recommended vaccines.

