

An Important Message from Your Teen’s School Nurse, Wendy Siegel, RN, BSN, Licensed School Nurse

Keeping your teen safe and healthy can feel like a full-time job. Parents and guardians, you can check one thing off your “worry list” by talking to your teen’s healthcare provider to see that they are up-to-date on their vaccinations! You might be surprised to hear this, but millions of teens across the country are under-vaccinated, and outbreaks of serious infectious diseases, which can lead to death, are still taking place.^{1,2}

The CDC recommends that teens receive the following vaccines to protect against serious infectious diseases.³ Talk with your healthcare provider about vaccinating your teen!

- **Meningococcal vaccine**
 - Meningococcal meningitis is a rare but serious disease that develops rapidly and can claim a life in as little as one day.⁴ Of those who survive, approximately one in five are left with serious medical problems like amputation, deafness, and brain damage.⁵ Teens are at increased risk of meningococcal meningitis. This increased risk may be due to activities like sharing utensils and kissing.^{6,7,8}
- **Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine**
 - HPV can cause various cancers in both boys and girls.⁹
- **Tdap vaccine**
 - Tetanus causes painful tightening of the muscles, usually all over your body; diphtheria causes a thick covering in the back of the throat and can also lead to breathing problems, paralysis, heart failure, and even death; and pertussis causes coughing spells and can lead to pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death, particularly in infants.¹⁰
- **Flu vaccine**
 - Flu can lead to fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, fatigue and more. Serious outcomes include hospitalization and even death.¹¹

Learn more about vaccination at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/index.html> and contact the nurses’ office with any questions at 614-417-5602

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). National, Regional, State, and Selected Local Area Vaccination Coverage Among Adolescents Aged 13–17 Years — United States, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6429a3.htm>.
2. United States Census Bureau. (2013). Age and Sex Composition in the United States. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/population/age/data/2012comp.html>.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016). Vaccines for Your Children: Protect Your Child at Every Age – 13 to 18 Years. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/protecting-children/years-13-18.html>.
4. World Health Organization. (2015, February). Meningococcal Meningitis. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs141/en/>.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013, March 22). Prevention and Control of Meningococcal Disease – Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/>.
6. Stephens, D.S.; Greenwood, B.; Brandtzaeg, P. (2007). Epidemic Meningitis, Meningococcaemia, and Neisseria Meningitis. *Lancet*. 369 (9580), 2199.
7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012, March 15). Meningococcal Disease. About: Causes and Transmission. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/causes-transmission.html>.

8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014, April 1). Meningococcal Disease Risk Factors. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/risk-factors.html>.
9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015, September 30). Human Papilloma Virus (HPV): The Link Between HPV and Cancer. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/parents/cancer.html>.
10. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014, June). Tdap Vaccine for Preteens and Teens. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/teen/tdap-basics-color.pdf>.
11. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014, June). Flu Vaccine for Preteens and Teens. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/teen/flu-basics-color.pdf>.