



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Keep Kids Current on Vaccines

National Immunization Week — 2014

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Twenty years ago, the Vaccines for Children program was created in response to a major measles epidemic. This program provides vaccinations for children whose parents cannot afford them. Since then, immunization rates have dramatically improved in the U.S.

Dr. Andrew Kroger is a physician with CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. He's joining us today to discuss the importance of keeping children up-to-date on their vaccinations. Welcome to the show, Andrew.

[Dr. Kroger] Thank you, Bob. It's great to be here.

[Dr. Gaynes] Andrew, let's start with how many vaccines are recommended for children in the U.S.?

[Dr. Kroger] We recommend 11 vaccines for the prevention of 14 vaccine-preventable diseases for infants and toddlers prior to the second birthday.

[Dr. Gaynes] And how many children are current on their vaccinations?

[Dr. Kroger] Well, we know we have high levels of coverage; fewer than one percent of children receive no vaccines. But for vaccines, such as measles-mumps-rubella, or MMR vaccine, we are on the order of 90 percent coverage for this vaccine, but I want to make the point that we need to have even greater coverage, we need higher levels, to prevent the outbreaks that can still occur in this country.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are vaccines required for school attendance?

[Dr. Kroger] Yes. For most vaccines, there are school laws that require vaccination for school attendance and this extends to day care attendance, as well, for many states. I'll make the point that these types of requirements help, in terms of achieving the high coverage levels that we have.

[Dr. Gaynes] How effective are vaccines in providing protection from childhood diseases?

[Dr. Kroger] Vaccines are very effective. Vaccines are licensed on the basis of effectiveness, usually 80 percent or higher. And it's also important to remember that, in

circumstances where a vaccine does not completely prevent disease, it can make it milder or prevent transmission. Also, vaccines are extremely safe, as well.

[Dr. Gaynes] What should parents do if children are behind in their vaccinations?

[Dr. Kroger] Well, it's never too late to catch up. It's critical for parents to contact their children's providers to have them caught up on vaccines that may have been missed. For doses of vaccines in a series that have already been given, those don't have to be re-started. So, I'll repeat, it's never too late to catch up.

[Dr. Gaynes] Andrew, where can listeners get more information about childhood immunizations?

[Dr. Kroger] They may visit our website at cdc.gov/vaccines.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Andrew. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Andrew Kroger about the importance of keeping children up-to-date on their vaccinations.

Parents—get your children vaccinated by age two and protect them from 14 serious diseases, keep updated records, and check with their health care provider about changes in vaccine recommendations.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.