



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Teen Vaccines

National, State, and Local Area Vaccination Coverage among Adolescents Aged 13–17 Years — United States, 2009

Recorded: August 17 2010; posted: August 19, 2010

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[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.

Although most vaccinations are given early in childhood, teenagers have immunization needs as well. Rates of teens getting recommended vaccines are increasing, but they remain below the rates for young children.

Dr. Christina Dorell is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of teenagers receiving the recommended vaccinations. Welcome to the show, Christina.

[Dr. Dorell] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Christina, what vaccines are specifically recommended for teenagers?

[Dr. Dorell] Three vaccines are specifically recommended for teenagers. The first is the meningococcal conjugate vaccine and that protects against meningitis. Then there's Tdap, the tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis vaccine. That protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis, or whooping cough. And for girls, there is the HPV vaccine that protects against the human papillomavirus, which causes most cases of cervical cancer. And everyone older than six months of age should receive the flu shot each year.

[Dr. Gaynes] At what age should teenagers get all these shots?

[Dr. Dorell] Adolescent vaccines should be given at 11 or 12 years of age, and if they're missed, they can be given throughout adolescence, but the sooner, the better.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are any of these vaccines *required* for teens to be able to attend school?

[Dr. Dorell] During the 2009-2010 school year, about half of schools required Tdap for a middle school entry. Some states require the meningococcal vaccine. And states continue to introduce bills to their legislatures to consider making these vaccines required for school. Parents can contact their state health departments to find out what is required in their state.

[Dr. Gaynes] Christina, if a teenager didn't get a recommended vaccine as a young child, can they and should they still get the shot?

[Dr. Dorell] Absolutely. They should get those vaccines, and parents can contact their child's doctor and review what vaccines are missing. Missing vaccines should be given as catch up vaccines.

[Dr. Gaynes] If a parent isn't sure their child is up-to-date on his or her vaccines, what should they do?

[Dr. Dorell] Parents should look for their child's shot card, which is their personal record of their child's shots. They should also contact their child's doctor and ask for records of their child's vaccinations. If they cannot get these records, some shots may have to be repeated or blood tests can be done to check the child's immunity against some infections.

[Dr. Gaynes] Christina, where can listeners get more information about vaccines recommended for teenagers?

[Dr. Dorell] Listeners can get more information about vaccines for teenagers by going to the CDC website at www.cdc.gov and type in the search box "teen vaccines."

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks Christina. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Christina Dorell about the importance of teenagers getting their recommended vaccinations.

Remember, rates of teens getting recommended vaccinations remain below the rates for young children. Parents should schedule an annual preventive check-up with their child's healthcare provider to identify any health problems and to ensure their children are up-to-date on all vaccines.

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, 24/7.