



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Teen Vaccines

National and State Vaccination Coverage among Adolescents Aged 13–17 Years — United States, 2010

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[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.

Parents may think their children are fully vaccinated by the time they reach kindergarten, but vaccines aren't just for babies. While most shots are given at a very young age, several vaccines are recommended for adolescents who are 11 and older.

Dr. Christina Dorell is a medical epidemiologist with CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of having your older children vaccinated. Welcome to the show, Christina.

[Dr. Dorell] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Christina, remind us, what are the vaccines specifically recommended for adolescents?

[Dr. Dorell] Three vaccines are specifically recommended for pre-teens and teens. There's Tdap which protects against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, or whooping cough. The meningococcal conjugate vaccine protects against meningococcal meningitis. There is also the HPV vaccine that protects against the human papillomavirus, the virus that causes most cases of cervical cancer. All kids age six months and older are also recommended for influenza, or flu, vaccine every year.

[Dr. Gaynes] So when should teens get these shots?

[Dr. Dorell] The vaccines for pre-teens and teens should be given starting at 11 or 12 years of age. If a teenager missed some of the vaccines recommended for young children or pre-teens, they can still get the shot and they should do so, as soon as possible. Parents can contact their child's doctor and review which catch-up vaccines their teenager should get.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are most teens getting the recommended shots?

[Dr. Dorell] The number of teens who are getting Tdap and the meningococcal vaccines is increasing, but we still would like to see every pre-teen and teen covered. The problem we're seeing is not enough girls are getting the HPV vaccine. So fewer than half of the girls who need this life-saving vaccine are receiving it, and of the girls who did receive HPV vaccine, almost one out of three did not complete the three shot series.

[Dr. Gaynes] Christina, what can be done to improve the HPV vaccination rates in teen girls?

[Dr. Dorell] Parents can help by asking their health care provider if their daughter is up-to-date. Since the HPV vaccine is a series of three shots over six months, we know it can be difficult to remember when shots are due. Some parents find it helpful to use a reminder system, such as calendar notes, computer reminders, refrigerator messages, or whatever works for their family. If you don't have insurance or if it does not cover vaccines, the Vaccines for Children program, or VFC, may be able to help. So ask your doctor or contact your local health department to learn more about getting free vaccines through the VFC programs. Parents whose daughters have already gotten HPV vaccine can talk to their friends, family, and other members of their community about protecting their daughters from cervical cancer.

[Dr. Gaynes] How can listeners get more information about vaccines for pre-teens and teens?

[Dr. Dorell] Listeners can go to www.cdc.gov and type "teen vaccines" in the search box.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Christina. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Christiana Dorell about the importance of ensuring older children are fully vaccinated.

If you're not sure if your pre-teen or teen is up-to-date on his or her vaccines, check with your health care provider.

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.