

HEADLINE: Millions of Teens Under-Vaccinated Nationwide.^{1,2} Together, We Can Help Protect our High School Students Against Serious Infectious Diseases.

For any parent or guardian of teens, safety and health are high on the priority list, which is why our school nurse Robin Allen, RN and Becky Beasley, BSN, RN are reminding teens and their parents/guardians about the importance of vaccination.

Parents/guardians: Check one thing off your “worry” list and talk to your teen’s health care provider to confirm they are up-to-date on their immunizations.

By age 16, most teens should have received at least four CDC-recommended vaccines to help protect them against serious infectious diseases like meningococcal meningitis and human papillomavirus (HPV), which can lead to serious health effects and even death.³ Here is some background on the diseases that recommended vaccines help protect your teen against:

- **Meningococcal meningitis**
 - 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)**
 - HPV can cause various cancers in both boys and girls.⁹
- **Tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap)**
 - 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; pertussis is a disease that can lead to coughing spells, pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death, particularly in infants.¹⁰
- **Influenza (flu)**
 - Flu can lead to fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, fatigue and more. Serious outcomes include hospitalization and even death.^{11,12}

Did you know...

1. Over the past four years, outbreaks of meningococcal meningitis took place on college campuses in Oregon and California.¹³
2. In recent years, 10,000-40,000 cases of pertussis (a disease that can lead to coughing spells, pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death) were reported.^{14,15}
3. Each year, more than 30,000 new cases of HPV-related cancer are found.¹⁶ Most of these cancers could be prevented by HPV vaccination at ages 11-12 years.⁹

To learn more about vaccination at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/index.html>.

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