

PVW 2019 Drop-in article/Blog post

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Protect Your Preteen From Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Everyone knows that babies and toddlers need shots to stay healthy, but preteens need shots to protect their health as well. What’s more, proof of certain shots are required to enter 7th grade.

“Vaccines are our best tool for giving our preteens safe and effective protection from infectious diseases. By ensuring our kids stay up-to-date on recommended vaccinations, we are helping protect our children, families, and community from serious, life-threatening illnesses,” said Wilma Wooten, MD, MPH, County public health officer.

That’s why the County Health Human Services Agency is reminding parents that March 3-9 is “Preteen Vaccine Week,” focusing on protecting kids 11 and 12 against dangerous vaccine-preventable diseases. Preteens need vaccines against whooping cough (Tdap), HPV, and meningitis (MenACWY), when they are 11-12 years old. Incoming 7th graders must also provide proof of having received the whooping cough shot and, now beginning in the upcoming school year, two doses of chickenpox vaccine before starting school. Additional meningitis vaccines are recommended when teens are 16 years old. Flu vaccine is also recommended for everyone 6 months or older, not just preteens and teens.

Dr. Wooten reminds parents, “If you haven’t done so already, now is the time to ask your doctor about the vaccines recommended for your child at their preteen visit, plus a flu vaccination every year.”

Making sure students have all the required vaccines is part of the countywide [Live Well San Diego](#) vision, an effort to improve the health and well-being of residents in the region.

Below is a checklist of needed preteen vaccines:

Preteen (11-12 years old) Vaccine Checklist

- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine— 2- or 3-dose series recommended for girls *and* boys
- Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine- required for incoming 7th graders
- Chickenpox (proof of two doses also required for 7th grade entry)
- Meningococcal vaccine
- Flu vaccine (*every* year)
- Any catch-up vaccines (e.g. 2nd dose of MMR [measles, mumps, rubella])

Parents should contact their doctor to schedule an appointment for needed vaccines. Parents whose children do not have insurance can contact a County Public Health Center (see a list of Centers here: <http://tinyurl.com/ny6aegx>) about vaccines at no charge.

For more information about immunizations and the diseases they protect against, please visit these websites:

County of San Diego Immunization Program

www.sdiz.org

California Department of Public Health Immunization Branch (CDPH)

www.GetImmunizedCA.org

CDPH School/Child Care Immunization Requirements

www.ShotsforSchool.org

Also, be sure to visit www.shotbyshot.org for true stories about people whose lives were affected by vaccine-preventable diseases.