



JUNE IS ADOLESCENT IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS MONTH

Although new vaccines are available, immunization rates for adolescents 11-18 years of age in the United States are far below the national goals. Immunizations provide important benefits to adolescents, especially as they develop into adults. Lower disease rates among adolescents may also lower their chances of passing disease to the very young and the elderly. While you can't protect adolescents from everything, you can protect them from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Immunizations can help:

- Keep adolescents healthy
- Prevent problems as they grow older
- Prevent the spread of disease

Today, immunizations protect adolescents from:

- **Meningitis (meningococcus)** – This bacterial infection poses a serious threat to adolescents. Meningitis can kill a healthy person in 48 hours or less. Up to 1 in 5 survivors of meningitis have problems that last the rest of their lives, including the loss of limbs, scarring, hearing loss and neurological damage.
- **Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Whooping Cough)** – Pertussis is spread by coughing and sneezing discharges. Anyone can catch pertussis spread it to others, including infants. Cases of whooping cough are growing the fastest among adolescents.
- **HPV (Human papillomavirus)** – HPV is the leading cause of cervical cancer in women.
- **Hepatitis B** – This disease could result in long term liver disease and death.
- **Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)** – A second dose is **required** for adolescents who have not previously received it.
- **Varicella (Chickenpox)** – A second dose is now **recommended** for adolescents who have not previously received it.
- **Influenza** – Now recommended for all children and adolescents 6 months through 18 years of age.
- **Hepatitis A** – This disease could result in severe illness and is commonly spread through contaminated food, improper food handling and person-to-person contact

Review the list above and make sure your adolescent is protected against these vaccine preventable diseases. Call your primary care physician today or the Geauga County Health District for additional information. The adolescent years present all kinds of challenges and dangers. Please do your part in making sure your adolescent is protected against these vaccine preventable dangers by getting them vaccinated.