



Frequently Asked Questions About Adolescent Immunizations

Why should adolescents be vaccinated?

Immunization is one of the most important things a parent can do to protect their adolescent's health. Today we can protect adolescents from 11 serious diseases. Failure to vaccinate may mean putting adolescents at risk for serious diseases.

What vaccines are recommended for adolescents?

Seven vaccines are recommended for adolescents beginning at 11 years old. Meningitis; Tetanus (Lockjaw), Diphtheria, and Pertussis (Whooping Cough); Hepatitis B; Influenza; Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (German Measles); Varicella (Chickenpox); Human Papillomavirus (HPV) for females.

Why do adolescents need additional shots?

Vaccines are not just for infants. As children get older, protection provided by some childhood vaccines can begin to wear off. Children can also develop risks for more diseases as they enter their adolescent years.

What would happen if my adolescent *didn't* get these shots?

Basically, one of two things could happen:

1. If your adolescent were to go through life without ever being exposed to any of these diseases, nothing would happen. The chance of them never being exposed to a vaccine-preventable disease is rare.
2. If your adolescent were exposed to any of these diseases, there is a good chance they would get the disease. Your child could get mildly ill and have to stay inside for a few days or could get very sick and have to be hospitalized. At the very worst, your adolescent could die.

In addition, your adolescent could spread the disease to other children and adults who are not immune. Some people such as those being treated for cancer have little or no immunity. When there are enough unprotected people in a community, the result can be a cluster of disease spreading through the community.

For More Information Contact your health care provider or *The West Virginia Immunization Program* **at (304) 558-2188 or (800) 642-3634 (in WV only) or** www.wvdhhr.org/immunizations/

