



Five Important Reasons to Immunize Your Adolescent

You want to do what is best for your adolescent. You know about the importance of seat belts and other ways to keep them safe. But, did you know that one of the best ways to protect your adolescent is to make sure they have all of their vaccinations?

Immunizations can save your adolescent's life. Because of advances in medical science, your son or daughter can be protected against more diseases than ever before. Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands have been eliminated completely and others are close to being gone – primarily due to safe and effective vaccines.

Vaccination is safe and effective. All vaccines are only given after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and healthcare professionals. Vaccines will involve some discomfort and may cause pain, redness, or tenderness at the site of injection but this is minimal compared to the pain, discomfort, and trauma of the diseases these vaccines prevent.

Immunization protects others you care about. Serious vaccine-preventable diseases still occur. Unfortunately, some babies are too young to be completely vaccinated and some people may not be able to receive vaccinations due to allergies, illness, weakened immune systems, or other reasons. To help keep these individuals safe, it is important that you and your children who are able to get vaccinated are fully immunized. This not only protects your family, but also helps prevent the spread of these diseases to your friends and loved ones.

Immunizations can save your family time and money. An individual with a vaccine-preventable disease can be kept out of schools. A prolonged illness can take a financial toll because of lost time at work, medical bills, or long-term disability care. In comparison, getting vaccinated against these diseases is a good investment and usually covered by insurance. The Vaccines for Children program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to adolescents under the age of 19 who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay.

Immunization protects future generations. Vaccines have reduced and, in some cases, eliminated many diseases that killed or severely disabled people just a few generations before. For example, smallpox vaccination helped eradicate that disease worldwide. Your children don't have to get smallpox shots anymore because the disease no longer exists. If we keep vaccinating now, parents in the future may be able to trust that diseases like meningitis and measles won't infect, cripple, or kill adolescents.

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/

