Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication

CTSI
Serving Colorado's Counties

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Immunization Awareness

Immunization is one of the most significant public health achievements of the 20th century. Vaccines have eradicated smallpox, eliminated wild poliovirus in the United States and significantly reduced the number of cases of measles, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis and other diseases. But despite these efforts, people in the U.S. still die from these and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

Vaccines offer safe and effective protection from infectious diseases. By staying up-to-date on the recommended vaccines, individuals can protect themselves, their families and friends and their communities from serious, life-threatening infections.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), in a revised policy statement, says increasing immunization coverage for children, teens, and young adults should be promoted more aggressively to achieve better immunization rates. The AAP says data from the 2007 National Immunization Survey indicates that about 90% of children between 19 months and 35 months old have received recommended doses of most vaccines.

However, the group also reports that maintaining and improving the proper levels of vaccination compliance is a challenge for pediatricians due to "systemic problems in the vaccine delivery system" and in the system for payment for vaccines, among other things.

The AAP says renewed emphasis on accepted guidelines is needed because pockets of under-immunized kids are found throughout the U.S. Immunization rates for adolescents continue to lag behind the goals set by the Healthy People 2010 program, a federally supported national effort

(Over)

FIGURE 1. Recommended adult immunization schedule, by vaccine and age group — United States, 2010

VACCINE ▼ AGE GROUP ▶	19–26 years	27–49 years	50–59 years	60–64 years	≥65 years
Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Td/Tdap)[1,*]	Substitute one-time dose of Tdap for Td booster; then boost with Td every 10 years				Td booster every 10 years
Human papillomavirus[2,*]	3 doses (females)				
Varicella[3,*]	2 doses				
Zoster[4]				1 dose	
Measles, mumps, rubella[5,*]	1 or 2 doses		1 dose		
Influenza[6,*]	1 dose annually				
Pneumococcal (polysaccharide)[7,8]	1 or 2 doses				1 dose
Hepatitis A[9,*]	2 doses				
Hepatitis B[10,*]	3 doses				
Meningococcal[11,*]	1 or more doses				

* Covered by the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.

For all persons in this category who meet the age requirements and who lack evidence of immunity (e.g., lack documentation of vaccination or have no evidence of prior infection)

Recommended if some other risk factor is present (e.g., based on medical, occupational, lifestyle, or other indications)

No recommendation

Immunization Awareness
(Continued)

that sets out nearly 500 objectives for improving the health of Americans, according to the AAP.

Roadblocks to Effective Immunzation

Despite improvements, challenges to immunization have cropped up.

These include:

- An increase in new vaccines and new vaccine combinations.
- A dramatic increase in vaccine cost and a lack of adequate payment procedures.
- Unanticipated manufacturing and delivery problems, which have caused shortages.
- The rise of a public anti-vaccination movement that uses the internet as well as standard media outlets to promote its position, which is "wholly unsupported by any scientific evidence" linking vaccines with autism and other childhood conditions.

The new policy statement calls for doctors to work individually and collectively at the state, local, and national levels to make sure that children eligible for immunizations get them, and on time.

Why Might Some Adults Need Vaccines?

Some adults incorrectly assume that the vaccines they received as children will protect them for the rest of their lives. Generally this is true, except that:

- Some adults were never vaccinated as children.
- Newer vaccines were not available when some adults were children.
- Immunity can begin to fade over time.
- As we age, we become more susceptible to serious disease caused by common infections (e.g., flu, pneumococcus).

Vaccines are important for adult and adolescents as well as children. Vaccine recommendations for adolescents and adults are based on a variety of factors including age, overall health status, and medical history.

To help you understand what vaccines you might need, you can complete the Adolescent and Adult Vaccine Quiz online at www2a.cdc.gov/nip/adultImmSched/

Sources: WebMD.com. and cdc.gov

Benefits Corner

Adult Preventative Immunizations

Immunizations are covered under the CHP plan if medically necessary or preventative. The following list provides those current immunizations that fall into that category. The immunizations may be done at a provider facility or pharmacy. These are also subject to specific age category.

Hepatitis A	Hepatitis B
Tetanus, Diptheria (Td)	Varicella (Chicken Pox)
Influenza (Flu Shot) Covered 100% for CHP	Pnuemococcal Conjugate (pneumonia)
Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)	Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
Meningococcal Polysaccharide	Herpes Zoster (Shingles)

In regards to preventative exclusions, see CHP Plan Document page 18;

Preventive Care Exclusions — The following services, supplies or care are not covered:

- Visits that exceed the limits above.
- Routine exams related to sports, insurance, school, church or camps.
- Routine care received in the emergency room.
- Immunizations for travel.

The CHP Membership Renewal Meeting will be held on September 23, 2010 at the CTSI offices.