



**For Immediate Release:**

February 10, 2014

## **Protect Your Preteens Throughout Their Lives**

Preteen Vaccine Week is February 9-15

LOS ANGELES – Protect your preteen’s health today and in the years ahead by staying up-to-date on all recommended vaccines. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, in support of Preteen Vaccine Week from February 9-15, 2014, reminds parents, preteens, providers, and community partners about the importance of adolescent immunizations.

“As children approach adolescence, peer relationships become the focal point of their universe, making them more likely to be exposed to certain diseases. At the same time, protection from some childhood vaccines begins to wear off,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. “Preteen vaccines boost immunity, prevent vaccine-preventable diseases, and prevent disease outbreaks in our schools and communities.”

### **Recommended Vaccines**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following vaccines for all 11-12 year olds:

- One dose of meningococcal vaccine, followed by a booster dose at 16 years of age;
- One dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis) vaccine;
- Three doses of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which is recommended for both boys and girls to prevent certain types of cancer;
- An annual seasonal influenza vaccine.

Some preteens may also need to catch-up on other immunizations, including chickenpox, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), and hepatitis B. Preteens who have missed any recommended vaccine doses should schedule a visit with their doctor or clinic to get caught up.

“Vaccines protect preteens throughout adolescence and beyond,” said Dr. Fielding. “Recent outbreaks of pertussis (whooping cough) and cases of bacterial meningitis are a reminder that vaccine-preventable diseases still exist and can spread easily. Vaccines can protect preteens from these serious diseases today, as well as infections that can lead to disease in the years ahead. For example, vaccinating preteens against HPV can prevent many of the 33,000 HPV-related cancers that occur every year in the United States.”

### **School Immunization Requirements**

California law requires that all students entering, advancing, or transferring into 7th grade show proof they received the Tdap vaccine. In addition, during outbreaks, unvaccinated students can be excluded from school until they are no longer at risk for the disease, which can be days or even weeks. For this reason, parents are encouraged to arrange for their preteens to be vaccinated now, to help keep them healthy and in the classroom.



## Resources for Vaccinations

Regardless of age, everyone is encouraged to consult their regular health care provider to inquire about all recommended vaccines. Under the Affordable Care Act, all new health plans will now be required to cover the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended vaccines for adults and children of all ages, without charging a deductible, copayment or coinsurance. Those who do not have a regular health care provider or health insurance coverage for vaccines can call the LA County Information Line at 2-1-1 from any cell phone or land line in the county, or visit [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip), for referrals to providers offering vaccines at no-cost or a reduced cost.

For more information about adolescent immunization recommendations and school requirements, visit:

- [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip)
- [www.shotsforschool.org](http://www.shotsforschool.org)
- [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Pages/PreteenVaccineWeek.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Pages/PreteenVaccineWeek.aspx)
- [www.shotbyshot.org](http://www.shotbyshot.org)

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$900 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: @LAPublicHealth.

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