



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRETEENS OFTEN MISS SHOTS THEY NEED *Parents Encouraged to Visit Healthcare Provider*

Shots aren't just for little kids; preteens (aged 11-12 years) need them too. But they don't often get them until after they get sick. During National Preteen Vaccination Week (Jan. 18 – 24), the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) urges parents to protect their children against vaccine-preventable diseases.

"Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, meningococcal meningitis, influenza—these illnesses all threaten our adolescents' health," said Dean Sidelinger, M.D., M.S.Ed, County Deputy Public Health Officer. "Sick preteens can also infect their younger siblings, some of whom may be too young to be vaccinated. The best way parents can protect adolescents is to schedule a visit with their healthcare provider."

A recent HHSA survey of San Diego County residents indicates low immunization rates among preteens and early teens, ranging from about 20.2 % for influenza vaccination, 37.1% for meningococcal vaccination to 45.7% for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccination. Immunity from previous childhood immunizations can decrease over time, leaving adolescents vulnerable to diseases.

Locally, the County of San Diego Immunization Branch is partnering with public and private groups to promote vaccinations. Some County Public Health Centers, libraries and other County facilities will offer information about preteen shots. Private health and social services providers, as well as school districts, will distribute materials. Several organizations, including the YMCA, and South Bay Community Services, will send letters to parents and provide informational flyers and brochures.

The San Diego County Immunization Coalition, a public-private partnership with about 150 member organizations, will distribute materials to spread the word about preteen immunizations and healthcare provider visits.

For more information about preteen vaccinations and the preteen healthcare provider visit, go to the San Diego County Immunization Initiative website at www.sdiz.org or contact Melissa Crase at (619) 692-8805.

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