

Recommended Vaccinations for School Aged Children

The following vaccinations are recommended by the Washington State Department of Health. These vaccinations are not required for school attendance, but are recommended to prevent the following diseases:

Meningococcal Vaccine – recommended for all students aged 11-12 years. If older students have not been immunized, it is recommended that they do so. ALL college freshmen who will be staying in dorms are strongly recommended to have this vaccine. There are typically 75-125 cases of bacterial meningitis contracted in Washington State each year. Even with treatment, about 5 percent of meningococcal cases are fatal. Up to 25 percent of patients who recover have chronic damage to the nervous system. Meningitis is spread by direct personal contact, such as sharing the same drinking glass or kissing.

Gardasil (Human Papilloma Virus) vaccine – recommended for all female students age 11-12 years, but licensed for all females ages 9-26 years. Gardasil protects against four types of HPV, which cause 70 percent of all cervical cancers and 90 percent of genital warts. This vaccine is given as a series of three shots over a six month period.

Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) - now recommended in place of the adolescent Td (Tetanus/diphtheria) dose. Pertussis (whooping cough) has been on the rise in recent years, but the older form of the vaccine caused more side effects in older children and was NOT recommended for children over 7 years of age. The acellular form is safer and will protect your 11 year old and up student from contracting pertussis. This vaccine is given to adolescents who have completed their childhood series of DPT/DTaP, but have not received their booster dose of Td. Subsequent Tdap boosters are recommended every ten years (yes, for adults too!)

Influenza Vaccine – now recommended each year for all children ages 6 months to 18 years. It is believed that children are likely to spread the flu to the very young and very old, who are more at risk of complications and/or dying. The flu is contagious before any symptoms appear, so vaccination has the potential to greatly reduce yearly flu deaths.

Please talk with your health care provider about these immunizations so you can make an informed decision for your children.

Terry Woodall, R.N.
District Nurse

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