

Why Do Adolescents Need Vaccines?

• **Vaccines have changed since kindergarten** – Just like technology has grown and changed, so have vaccines. We now have the ability to protect against more diseases than ever before! Vaccines are now available to guard against serious diseases like meningitis and human papillomavirus (HPV).

• **Protection from childhood vaccines does not last forever** – Some vaccines protect for a short time - even years - but not your whole life. Examples are tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough) vaccines. Children 11-12 years of age need another dose to be fully protected.

• **The virus may change** – Viruses can change enough that you will no longer be protected against the disease. Influenza is like this. You need a flu vaccine every year to be protected.



Children from birth through 18 years of age can get Vaccines for Children (VFC) vaccine if they:

- are on Medicaid
- do not have health insurance
- are American Indian or Alaskan Native
- are under-insured*

*If your health insurance does not pay anything for vaccines, your child may be able to get VFC vaccine. Check with your doctor or your local health department.

Many vaccines are available - for a limited time - at no or little cost through your local health department for families that have a high co-pay or high deductible and cannot afford out-of-pocket expenses for vaccines. In order to prepare for the new school immunization rules, some local health departments can provide the following vaccines:

- Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap/Td)
- Meningococcal (MCV4)
- Varicella, also known as chickenpox (Var)

If your child is 11 years of age and is entering sixth grade or is 11 through 18 years of age and is changing school districts, they may be eligible to receive vaccines through this program. Check with your local health department to see if vaccines are available.

If you are 19 years of age or older and have no insurance or have insurance that does not cover vaccines, contact your local health department.