Frequently Asked Questions
Vaccine for Teens Program

Overall

Are there new immunization requirements for the 2010 – 2011 school year?
Yes, Students entering grades 6 – 12 must have appropriate documentation of the following vaccinations:

- Tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap)
- Meningococcal vaccine (Menactra)
- Two varicella vaccinations (spaced per CDC guidelines) or documentation of prior infection with chickenpox, or lab studies consistent with prior infection.

What documentation of prior infection of chickenpox is acceptable for students in grades 6 – 12?
For children entering grades 2 – 12, documentation from a parent is sufficient. A written statement should include date of disease, a parent's signature, and date of signature.

What is a medical exemption?
A medical exemption is a physician's certification that a particular immunization is detrimental to the child's health. It must state in writing that the child has a medical contraindication to receiving the vaccine and must be resubmitted to the school each year. A separate exemption must be written for each vaccine that is contraindicated.

What is a religious objection?
A religious objection must state that the objection to immunization is based on religious grounds. Each objected immunization must be specified. The objection must be in writing, signed by the child's parent and delivered to the school. There is no requirement of proof, but the written objection must be resubmitted each year.

Are there exceptions to school exclusion?
Indiana Code states that a child is not permitted to attend school beyond the first day without furnishing a written record, unless:

- The school gives a waiver (for a period not to exceed 20 days)
- The local health department or a physician determines that the child's immunizations have been delayed due to extreme circumstances and that the required immunizations will not be completed by the first day of school. The parent must furnish a written statement and a time schedule approved by a physician or the health department
- A medical exemption or religious objection is on file

Where can I get these vaccines for my child?

Starting March 1, the Fort Wayne-Allen County Department of Health will offer a special month-long vaccine clinic for teens to help families meet the requirements of the new school rule.

The *Vaccines for Teens* clinic will be open Monday through Thursday, 3 to 6:30 p.m., from March 1-March 25. The clinic is at Carew Medical Park, 1818 Carew St., 3rd floor. Parking is available in an attached garage. At the clinic, the health department will also continue to offer free H1N1 flu vaccine.

Parents should bring the child's shot record and/or any proof of chickenpox infection or past immunization. Children under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian (with notarized documentation of guardianship).

Can Grandparents bring children to the clinic if the parents are unavailable?

If they have notarized documentation of guardianship to do so.

What if the parents cannot locate a shot record to bring to the clinic?

Due to sheer volume of children needing vaccinated, we will not be able to look up individual shot records at the Carew site. However, this will not preclude the child from obtaining vaccinations. All vaccinations will be administered for that child if a shot record cannot be produced.

Is there a charge for these vaccinations?

No.

What is the anticipated wait time at the Clinic?

We do not know how predict what the turnout will be. We have, however, staffed rather heavily to try and accommodate as many children as possible each day.

Meningococcal Vaccine

What is Meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by the bacterium Neisseria meningitidis and generally affects children and young adults in two ways:

- meningitis (an inflammation of the tissues covering the brain and or spinal cord)
- bloodstream infection (that usually leads to bleeding under the skin)

Symptoms of meningococcal disease can include a sudden onset of fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, and confusion and in blood stream infections a rash will develop.

What is the Meningitis Vaccine?

The Meningitis vaccine is used to prevent infection caused by meningococcal bacteria. The vaccine contains four of the most common types of meningococcal bacteria. The vaccine works by exposing you to a small dose of the bacteria or a protein from the bacteria, which causes your body to develop immunity to the disease. **The vaccine is not used to treat an active infection** that has already developed in the body.

Who should receive the vaccine?
The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends routine vaccination with the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menactra) for all students 11-12 years of age, or 13 –18 years of age if not previously vaccinated. Children ages 2 -10, who have a disorder of the immune system or whose spleen has been removed should also receive the Meningitis vaccine as they are at higher risk for contracting this disease. Teens should also get it when they start high school or if they are going to be living in a dorm at college and haven't gotten a meningococcal vaccine yet.
However, in Indiana, all children in grades 6th through 12th grade will be required to have this vaccine by the first day of school in the fall of 2010.

Why is it important to prevent Meningococcal disease?
Between 1,000 and 2,600 cases of meningococcal disease occur in the United States annually. This disease progresses rapidly and often results in permanent hearing loss, mental retardation, limb amputations and even death. The disease can be hard to diagnose, especially in its early stages. Meningococcal disease can take the life of a child in just 24 hours.

Any reason I should not take the Meningococcal vaccine?
Do not receive the meningitis vaccine if you have ever had an allergic reaction to a diphtheria or a meningococcal vaccine, or if you have: a history of Guillain-Barre syndrome; or if you are allergic to latex rubber.

Does the Meningitis vaccine have thimerosal?
No. Like most vaccines currently given to children, the meningitis vaccine is free of thimerosal and other preservatives.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?
Becoming infected with meningitis is much more dangerous to your health than receiving the vaccine. The side effects to the meningitis vaccine include injection site pain, redness, and swelling; headache or fatigue. Other side effects may occur and you should discuss with your doctor if you have any new symptoms after vaccination.

Tdap

What diseases does this vaccine prevent?
The vaccine is highly effective for the prevention of diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis -- all of which are serious, potentially deadly, bacterial infections.

Who should get this vaccine?
DTaP vaccination is one of the recommended childhood immunizations. DTaP vaccine can be safely given to infants. Five DTaP vaccines are recommended. They are usually given to children at ages 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15-18 months, and 4-6 years. After the initial series of the DTaP immunizations, a Tdap vaccine should be given around age 11 or 12, and every 10 years thereafter. This vaccine provides further protection against tetanus diphtheria, and pertussis, and is used as a booster.
However, in Indiana, all children in grades 6th through 12th grade will be required to have this vaccine by the first day of school in the fall of 2010.

Why is this vaccine important?
Since the 1980s, there's been a dramatic increase in the number of cases of pertussis, especially among teens (10–19 years of age) and babies less than 5 months of age. In 2007 there were more than 10,000 cases including 10 deaths from pertussis nationally.

Does the Tdap vaccine have thimerosal?
No. Like most vaccines currently given to children, Tdap is free of thimerosal and other preservatives.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?
Most children have no serious reactions from this combined vaccine. The most frequently reported side effects following vaccination with Tdap are headache, generalized body aches, and tiredness.

What if my child has had a recent tetanus shot?
Tdap can be administered at an interval <10 years since receipt of the last tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine to protect against pertussis. A one year interval is sufficient to wait between tetanus containing immunizations.

Varicella Vaccine
This vaccine prevents chickenpox, which is caused by a virus, the varicella-zoster virus.
Chickenpox spreads from person to person by direct contact or through the air by coughing or sneezing. It is highly contagious. It can also be spread through direct contact with the fluid from a blister of a person infected with chickenpox, or from direct contact with a sore from a person with shingles.
The most common symptoms of chickenpox are rash, fever, coughing, fussiness, headache, and loss of appetite. The rash usually develops on the scalp and body, and then spreads to the face, arms, and legs. The rash usually forms 200-500 itchy blisters in several successive crops.

Why is this vaccine important?

Many cases of chickenpox are mild, but deaths from this disease can occur. Before the development of a vaccine, about 100 people died every year in the United States from chickenpox. Most of these people were previously healthy. Chickenpox also accounted for about 11,000 hospitalizations each year. Even children with average cases of chickenpox are uncomfortable and need to be kept out of daycare or school for a week or more.

Who should get this vaccine?

Chickenpox vaccine is recommended for the following:

- All children younger than age 13 years (one dose at 12-15 months and a second dose at age 4-6 years);
- Everyone age 13 years and older who has never had chickenpox (two doses, given 4-8 weeks apart);

However, in Indiana, all children in grades 6th through 12th grade will be required to have this vaccine by the first day of school in the fall of 2010.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Possible side effects are generally mild and include redness, stiffness, and soreness at the injection site; such localized reactions occur in 19% of children immunized and 24% of adolescents and adults (slightly more following the second dose). A small percentage of persons develop a mild rash, usually around the spot where the shot was given.