



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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ADOLESCENTS VULNERABLE TO WHOOPING COUGH AND CHICKENPOX *Parents Encouraged to Protect Their Children against Vaccine-Preventable Diseases*

The H1N1 vaccine has been receiving a lot of attention these days. While it's important that everyone gets vaccinated against this new flu virus, it's imperative for parents to make sure their children also have the other recommended vaccines to protect them from diseases that could endanger their health.

January 17-23 is Preteen Vaccination Week and the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) urges parents to protect their children against vaccine-preventable diseases, such as chickenpox and whooping cough.

"Immunity from certain vaccines could diminish by the time children reach adolescence," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. "That's why it's important for parents to make sure their children's immunizations are up-to-date to protect them from serious diseases that can easily spread."

Diseases like pertussis (whooping cough) and chickenpox continue to be present in San Diego County. Whooping cough was especially severe in 2009 when 140 cases were reported to the County, 89 more than the year before. Also, in 2009, local schools reported 10 chickenpox clusters affecting 69 students.

HHSA's Immunization Branch is partnering with public and private groups to promote vaccinations. Preteen immunization materials will be on display at several County facilities, including the Health Complex on Rosecrans Street and the County Administration Center on Pacific Highway.

HHSA is also partnering with the San Diego County Immunization Coalition, a public-private partnership of about 150 health and social services organizations, to send messages about vaccines to the general public using social media tools like Twitter and Facebook.

"Adolescents who have not received all the recommended vaccines could infect their younger siblings, some of whom may be too young to be vaccinated," added Wooten.

It is recommended that parents of adolescents consult with a doctor to make sure their children have received all the recommended vaccines. Those vaccines include the meningococcal vaccine, a Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough) booster, a second chickenpox shot (if they have never had chickenpox disease), and the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine series (now for boys and girls).

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

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