



Vermont Teen Immunization Rates Increasing



For Immediate Release: August 31, 2016

Media Contact:

Vermont Department of Health
Communication Office
802-863-7281

More Work Needed to Fully Protect Teens from Cancer-Causing HPV

BURLINGTON – Vermont tops the nation in chicken pox vaccinations, according to newly published results from the 2015 **National Immunization Survey for Teens** (NIS-Teen), but there is more work to be done to ensure all Vermont teens are protected against cancer-causing human papillomavirus (HPV).

The annual telephone survey, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that Vermont adolescents age 13 to 17 had the highest rate of varicella (chicken pox) immunization in the country. More than 96 percent of teens in Vermont were fully vaccinated, which is significantly higher than the national average (83 percent). Vermont teens also had higher than average vaccination rates for Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis), meningococcal disease and HPV.

The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends adolescents age 11 to 12 receive vaccines to prevent diseases, including one that protects against HPV-infection.

HPV infection can result in certain types of cancers, most notably cervical cancer, but also cancers of the throat, tongue, tonsils, and genital and anal cancer, as well as genital warts. The HPV vaccine is the first highly effective vaccine to prevent multiple types of cancers.

Administered as a three shot series over six months, the HPV vaccine has been recommended for girls since 2006 and for boys since 2011. In Vermont, nearly 69 percent of girls and 66 percent of boys have received at least one HPV shot.

"This new data is encouraging," said Dr. Erica Gibson of the University of Vermont Children's Hospital and the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program. "We're seeing that overall, Vermont is moving toward its goals for teen vaccinations. While the trends are good for the initial dose of the HPV vaccine, the challenge is to make sure teens get their additional shots to be fully protected by this safe and effective vaccine."

Many Vermont teens who start the vaccine series do not get back to the doctor's office for the full course of shots. Since it was first recommended for them nine years ago, 54 percent of girls in Vermont had completed the full vaccination series. In just four years since being recommended for boys, their immunization rates for the series have risen to 40 percent.

Closing the gap so that teens get the full series of shots is a priority for Vermont health officials and providers.

"I'm pleased with the progress to date and the strong support of our health care partners," said Christine Finley, immunization program manager with the Vermont Department of Health. "We need to continue to build on the work of parents, primary care providers and schools to protect teens."

Finley cited as an example the department's work with the National Improvement Partnership Network collaborating with health care providers to improve systems that help deliver recommended immunizations to Vermonters. "My hope is that in the very near future, all teens will be able to realize the full potential of the HPV vaccine to prevent cancer."

To teens who may not have finished getting all the shots, Dr. Gibson offered reassurance. "Even if things get off track after you get the first dose, don't worry. It's never too late to go back and get your additional doses. It's the easiest thing you can do to protect yourself against cancer."

For more information about the 2015 NIS-Teen study, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vaxview/teenvaxview>

To learn more about immunizations in Vermont, visit: healthvermont.gov/hc/imm

For health news, alerts and information - visit healthvermont.gov

Join us on [Facebook](#)

Follow us on [Twitter](#)

#

Vermont Department of Health | 108 Cherry Street | Burlington, VT 05402
Voice: 802-863-7200 | In Vermont 800-464-4343 | Fax: 802-865-7754 | TTY/TDD: Dial 711 first
Health Care Provider Infectious Disease Reporting: 802-863-7240 or 800-640-4374
| | | | [Web Browser](#)