

**September 3, 2013**

**Media contact:** Susan Wickstrom, 971-673-0892 or 503-884-0586;  
susan.d.wickstrom@state.or.us

**Oregon teens can be better protected against diseases**  
*Adolescent immunization rates are good for pertussis, low for meningococcal, flu, HPV*

Teenagers may feel invincible, but diseases like meningitis and the flu can't be stopped by coolness alone – even adolescents need immunizations. And Oregon teens lack protection against some diseases, according to a study done by the Oregon Health Authority's immunization program (OIP).

That study examined 2012 vaccination rates for Oregon adolescents (ages 13 to 17) for tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap), seasonal influenza, meningococcal disease and human papilloma virus (HPV).

“The Tdap rates for teens are pretty good, most likely because it's required for school,” says Paul Cieslak, M.D., medical director for the Oregon Immunization Program. “But adolescents need recommended shots like the meningococcal vaccine, especially if they're heading off to live in a dorm or other close quarters where meningitis can occur.”

OIP's data are taken from records for 200,000 teens in the ALERT Immunization Information System, which is used by 95 percent of Oregon's immunization providers.

(more)

Nine out of 10 Oregon teens have had the Tdap vaccine to prevent pertussis, but only about two-thirds have been immunized against meningococcal disease. Even fewer have received the HPV vaccine, which prevents cancer and is now recommended for boys as well as girls.

“An adolescent’s well child check-up or sports physical is a perfect opportunity to update their recommended immunizations,” says Cieslak. “If all kids get vaccinated, it will reduce the chance that diseases like the flu spread through schools.”

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the annual National Immunization Survey (NIS) results for adolescents Friday, and Oregon’s teen rates for Tdap were higher than the national average and reached the Healthy People 2020 target. But rates for meningococcal vaccines were lower than the rest of the country’s, and HPV was slightly higher for girls, but much lower for boys.

Cieslak urges parents to ask their health care provider about recommended immunizations at their adolescent’s next visit.

“Immunizations are an effective way to protect against many diseases and help us to make Oregon one of the healthiest states,” he says.

For more information on adolescent immunization, visit [healthoregon.org/imm](http://healthoregon.org/imm).

# # #