



ParentPages

SHOTSMARTS FROM IMMUNIZE GEORGIA

Protecting Your Family - Shots Are Not Just for Babies

Vaccines are not just for babies anymore. Preventing diseases now has a wider focus which includes adolescents, young adults and adults.

As caregivers and household members, pertussis (whooping cough) can be passed on to infants and young children who may not be fully protected. Pertussis in infants can be deadly. Protecting adolescents and adults has the ultimate outcome of protecting the child. On the other hand, young children can spread diseases such as influenza, hepatitis A and varicella to adolescents, young adults or the elderly.

Since early 2005, several new vaccines (shots) have been approved to protect your family. Changes and additions have been made to both the Recommended Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Schedule and the Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule.

For specific information on vaccines for children, adolescents and adults, please visit <http://www.vaccineinformation.org/>. Be sure to ask your doctor about these recent changes which are discussed below:

Hepatitis A* vaccine is now recommended for all children at age 1 year (12 through 23 months). The two doses in the series should be given at least six months apart.

Preventing **hepatitis B** infection involves testing all pregnant women at each pregnancy for hepatitis B during an early prenatal visit and/or testing women upon admission to labor and delivery. Additional recommendations include:

- All newborns should receive the hepatitis B vaccine before hospital discharge.
- All previously unvaccinated children and adolescents under 19 years of age should receive hepatitis B vaccine.

Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4) was approved by the FDA in January 2005.

- All children age 11 to 12 years old should receive the vaccine, as well as adolescents who have not received it who are entering high school.
- All college freshmen living in dormitories should also be vaccinated with MCV4 or meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine (MPSV4).

Two new vaccines are now available to protect against **pertussis**.

- Adolescents (11 to 12 years of age) should receive a single dose of Tdap vaccine in place of the tetanus (Td) booster.
- Adolescents (13 through 18 years of age) who missed the Td booster at 11 to 12 years of age should receive a single dose of Tdap.
- Adults (19 through 64 years of age) who have or anticipate having close contact with an infant should receive a single dose of Tdap.
- Pregnant women should receive a dose of Tdap in the immediate postpartum period if they have not received Tdap previously.

Efforts to protect families from **influenza** will be changing for the 2006-2007 flu season. All children 6 through 59 months of age and their family members or caregivers should now be vaccinated against influenza each year.

To learn more about protecting your family from influenza, please go to <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/groups.htm>. For more information on the differences between the seasonal influenza and an influenza pandemic, please visit <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>. To learn more about preparing your family for an influenza pandemic, click on the "Individual Planning" section of this Website.

*These recommendations are provisional and will become final once they are accepted by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Secretary of Health and Human Services and are published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). ■

Pertussis Spreads from Adolescents and Adults to Infants and Young Children

Did you know you are at risk to catch pertussis (whooping cough) and that you can spread it to infants and other members of your household? Did you know that infants (babies) can die from pertussis – all from just a cough?

Lynne and Phil Baker know. Their son, Nelyn Frend-Theodore Baker was born healthy on April 7, 2004. Nelyn died of pertussis on April 25, 2004. Two weeks before Nelyn was born, Lynne was working at her job at a bookstore when a man coughed on her. She remembers thinking, “Great, by the time I have this baby, I am going to be sick.”

The day she went into labor, the cough began and rapidly worsened. She went to the doctor twice within Nelyn’s first two weeks. A chest X-ray showed nothing, and she felt well between coughing spells. Her doctor suggested that her condition could be related to a drug she had taken to stop contractions in the last months of her pregnancy. She was given antibiotics at the second visit.

Four days later, Nelyn became fussy, listless and started coughing. When Phil and Lynne took him to the doctor the next morning, he turned blue and was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance. When he died, his cause of death was listed as pneumonia. It was not until 10 days later that the Fulton County Health Department contacted the Bakers with the news that hospital tests showed Nelyn had died from pertussis.

In the days following Nelyn’s death, family surrounded the Baker household, and then everyone traveled by car from Atlanta, Ga., to Michigan for the burial of Nelyn’s ashes. During this time, the Bakers’ teenage son and daughter, as well as Lynne’s mother and sister, all came down with respiratory problems. In all, seven family members became sick. Lynne’s sister, Julie, experienced months of problems, including long coughing fits and being unable to take a deep breath. When she went to the Emergency Room because her hands and feet were turning blue, she told the doctor about her nephew dying from pertussis. The doctors did not believe Julie. The Baker teenagers were taken out of school for a week. The school nurse told their mother, she did not believe it either, because, in her view, healthy people did not get pertussis.

In telling the story, Nelyn’s short, sweet life can make a difference. Let this be a wake-up call for all of us to take action and raise awareness that pertussis is out there. Its effects are deadly and there are ways to prevent and identify pertussis.

Pertussis is on the rise

- In 1976, a total of 1,000 cases of pertussis were reported, compared to 25,827 cases in 2004¹.
- One study suggests as many as 800,000 to one million cases of pertussis are occurring each year – many of which are never diagnosed as pertussis².

Adolescents and adults can get pertussis

- In 2004, 34 percent of the reported pertussis cases were in adolescents and 24 percent were in adults.³
- In adolescents or adults, symptoms can be mild to severe.
- Pertussis can be spread before symptoms begin and can still be spread for up to two weeks after coughing begins.²

Adolescents and adults spread pertussis to infants

- Adolescents and adults can pass pertussis to infants who are too young to be completely vaccinated against it (younger than 6 months old).
- Between 1997 and 2000, 63 percent of infants under 6 months of age with pertussis were admitted to the hospital. Ninety percent of the deaths from pertussis were in infants.⁴

New vaccines to protect against pertussis

Two new vaccines (Tdap) are now available to protect adolescents and adults from tetanus, diphtheria AND pertussis. See *opposite page* for details.

TAKE ACTION

- If you have a young infant in the house, talk to your doctor about getting the Tdap vaccine yourself.
- If you have severe coughing for a week or more, talk to your doctor about pertussis.
- Be sure young children complete the DTaP vaccine series on time.
- Make sure your adolescent receives a health check before middle school and high school to identify vaccines needed.

For more information, please visit www.pertussis.com.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases. Atkinson W, Hamborsky J, McIntyre L, Wolfe S, eds. 9th ed. Washington, DC: Public Health Foundation, 2006.

2 “Pertussis, moving from the young to preteens.” Infectious Diseases in Children. February 2006.

3 “Pertussis vaccines seek to limit spread from adults and adolescents to infants.” Infectious Diseases in Children. March 2006.

4 Immunization Action Coalition. Unprotected People - Report # 76. June 23, 2005. www.immunize.org. ■