FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Rick Scott
Governor

Lillian Rivera, RN, MSN, PhD, Administrator

March 1st, 2011

Dear Parents,

The Miami-Dade County Health Department and Miami-Dade County Public Schools would like to take the opportunity to inform you about several vaccines available for your adolescent child that are not required for school entry but highly recommended for students in your child's age group. Having your child protected against these diseases could be of benefit in their near future e.g. college or university admission requirements as well as to protect your child from transmitting or becoming infected by virus or diseases.

You should review these recommendations and discuss this with your child's pediatrician to make sure that your child has received these vaccines. If your child does not have a pediatrician or health insurance the Miami-Dade County Health Department can provide these vaccines to your child free of charge (through 18 yrs of age).

Meningococcal vaccine: prevents the spread of a bacteria that can infect a person's blood stream and cause a form of meningitis. This disease can be fatal and can leave many survivors with lifelong complications. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends children receive this vaccine at 11 yrs of age with a booster dose several years later. Many colleges and universities require this vaccine prior to admission.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is recommended for persons between the ages of 9 to 26 years. It consists of three doses of vaccines that should be given within a 6 month period. There are two different HPV vaccines: one vaccine brand is only given to females and protects them from cervical cancer, and the other brand can be given to both females and males, it protects females from cervical cancer and both females and males from genital warts.

Two other recommended vaccines are hepatitis A and Tetanus diphtheria pertussis (Tdap) booster. The hepatitis A vaccine protects against the hepatitis A virus that can be transmitted from infected food or water and can damage your liver. Children should receive a booster dose of Tdap, if they have not received tetanus diphtheria (TD) vaccine in more than two years. This is to ensure that your child is currently protected against pertussis (whooping cough).

For more information about vaccines benefits and safety visit http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/. If you do not have a pediatrician for your child and would like to receive immunization services please call the Miami-Dade County Health Department to schedule an appointment at 786-845-0550. (Note: Children older than 18 years of age attending Miami-Dade County Public Schools are also eligible for free vaccines at the Miami-Dade County Health Department.)

Sincerely,

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Chief Physician

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