

MEDICAL DIRECTOR MESSAGE

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Adolescents Need Vaccinations, Too

Patients and parents don't always recognize the importance of immunizations for adolescents. But vaccines are a safe, effective, *and necessary* way to protect adolescents against potentially deadly diseases, including:

- ✓ Meningococcal meningitis
- ✓ Influenza
- ✓ Tetanus
- ✓ Diphtheria
- ✓ Pertussis
- ✓ Human papilloma virus (HPV)

These are serious diseases that can cause breathing difficulties, heart problems, nerve damage, pneumonia, and, in some cases, even seizures and death. The HPV vaccine can also prevent cancers of the throat and cervix later in life.



Many of our members might be new to you and have immunization records from different states and medical providers. We encourage you to work with parents to obtain prior records. The CDC has a list of state immunization record contacts to utilize when needing [immunization information system](#) (IIS) data for patients who have transferred from other locations.

Is It Viral Or Bacterial? If It's Pharyngitis, Test!



How serious is antibiotic resistance, really? Really serious. The CDC reported three million resistant infections and 35,000 deaths in 2019. CDC data in ion. Patients presenting with pharyngitis or upper respiratory conditions often request antibiotics as a silver bullet. But proper testing is required to identify whether the source of the sore throat is viral or bacterial, and to prevent the spread of sickness and reduce unnecessary use of antibiotics. If the test indicates viral pharyngitis or upper respiratory infection, antibiotics are contraindicated.

The US Family Health Plan at PacMed encourages the use of strep testing and viral swabs to help identify the cause of pharyngitis and upper respiratory infections. Empiric treatment without testing increases the risk of personal and systemic problems for the patient and for healthcare system down the line.

Let's all do our part to reduce excessive use of antibiotics. Many patients will ask for antibiotics inappropriately and cite that they improved symptoms in past episodes of viral bronchitis, pharyngitis, or URI. The anti-inflammatory effect of antibiotics can be quite alluring. It may seem challenging to counsel patients about this when they are asking for antibiotics that are not indicated. But the truly hard part will come when antibiotic resistant infections become even more commonplace than they are now, due to poor stewardship in the current era.