

Children's Health

School's Out For Summer, But Health Is Still Important

(NAPSA)—For teens, this is the season for sleeping in, beach trips and first jobs. For their parents, however, it's time to worry about common summer health risks.

In fact, a new survey supported by the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) reveals that one in four parents of teens is extremely or very concerned about their teen's health during the upcoming summer break. Notably, heat exhaustion is the top health concern for 35 percent of parents and 75 percent will insist that their teens wear sunscreen while engaging in summer activities.

According to the survey, 92 percent of parents plan to maintain open communication with their children to ensure that they have a safe summer. In fact, online safety is a top summer safety concern for parents of teens, and 41 percent are extremely or very concerned about proper decision-making in an unsafe situation.

In addition, the survey reveals that one-third of parents agree that it is important for their teens to have a summer job, to learn work ethic and responsibility.

Here are some of the respondents' other health concerns:

- Ninety-five percent of parents want their teens to stay active and fit.

- Eighty-one percent plan to provide their teens with healthy food choices over the summer.

- Almost 30 percent feel it is extremely or very important to take their teens to the doctor for a summer health visit.



Many parents in a recent survey feel it is essential for their teens to stay active and fit.

- Almost 63 percent feel it is extremely important for their teens to get vaccinated against infectious diseases.

- Despite the finding that almost two in three parents will make sure that their young teen is up-to-date with his or her vaccination schedule to ensure a healthy summer, only 12 percent cite pertussis (whooping cough) as a summer health concern.

Whooping cough is a disease against which children are routinely vaccinated that is currently on the rise among teens in the United States. Whooping cough is a highly contagious bacterial infection of the respiratory system that causes spasms of severe coughing.

Teens are at risk of whooping cough because childhood immunization begins to wear off five to 10 years after the last routine vaccination shot, typically administered when children are between 4

and 6 years old. Because of this, many teens are vulnerable and unprotected against this serious disease.

Teens are often undiagnosed because they don't show symptoms. They can then become the source of infection for family members and others.

Whooping cough can also be difficult to detect because the first symptoms are similar to the common cold with a mild fever, runny nose and a cough. Symptoms generally progress to more severe coughing episodes, often with a high-pitched "whoop," followed by vomiting. These severe coughing spells can last up to 10 weeks.

Once made aware of their teen's potential susceptibility, an overwhelming 92 percent of parents surveyed agree that young teens should receive a whooping cough booster. The good news is that in 2005 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved booster vaccines for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis for use in adolescents.

To help educate parents about how to keep their teens happy, healthy and active over the summer, the National PTA launched "*Summer Break—What's at Stake?*" Parents and caregivers are encouraged to visit www.pta.org to obtain useful information about teen summer health. GlaxoSmithKline has provided funding and other support to the National PTA for the survey and the "*Summer Break—What's at Stake?*" campaign.