

# Information for parents about pre-teen vaccines

**A**s kids get older, protection provided by some childhood vaccines can begin to wear off. Kids can also develop risks for more diseases as they get older. Help your child transition into the teen years in a healthy way by staying up-to-date on pre-teen vaccines. Doctors recommend that all 11 and 12 year olds get the Meningococcal, Tdap, and influenza (flu) vaccines. 11 and 12 year old girls should also get the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine.

## Recommended vaccines and the diseases they prevent

### Meningococcal disease (a common cause of meningitis)

**Disease** Meningococcal meningitis is a very serious infection of the lining around the brain and spinal cord. It can cause death. Meningococcal bloodstream infection can cause loss of an arm or leg and even death.

**Vaccine** Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) protects against these infections. Pre-teens should receive a single shot of this vaccine during their 11 or 12 year old check-up. If your teenager missed getting the vaccine at his/her check-up, ask the doctor about getting it now.



### Pertussis (whooping cough)

**Disease** Whooping cough is highly contagious with prolonged cough. If it is transmitted to infants, it may be life-threatening.

**Vaccine** Tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap) is an improvement to the old Td booster because it adds protection from whooping cough while still maintaining protection from tetanus and diphtheria. Pre-teens should receive a single shot of Tdap at their 11 or 12 year old check-up.



### Influenza (flu)

**Disease** The flu is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs that is caused by a virus. Most people with the flu are sick for about a week, but then feel better. But some people can get very sick and some can die. School age children suffer from flu more than any other age group.

**Vaccine** A flu vaccine is the best way to protect against the flu. All children age 6 months through their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday should get one every year. It is very important for children with asthma or diabetes to get vaccinated. The flu vaccine can be given from September through March. It cannot cause the flu.



*Help keep your pre-teen healthy and safe with immunizations.*

### Human papillomavirus (HPV)

**Disease** HPV is a virus that is spread through sexual contact. It is most common in people in their teens and early 20s. HPV is the major cause of cervical cancer in women.

**Vaccine** HPV vaccine protects against the types of HPV that most commonly cause cervical cancer and genital warts. This vaccine is recommended for 11 and 12 year old girls. Ideally girls should get 3 doses of this vaccine before their first sexual contact when they could be exposed to HPV. If your teenage daughter missed getting the vaccine when she was 11 or 12, ask her doctor about getting it now.

**Make sure to ask the doctor if your pre-teen is up-to-date on these childhood vaccines too: Hepatitis B; Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR); Polio; and Chickenpox.**

Getting your child vaccinated can be easy and inexpensive. For families with health insurance, all or most of the cost of vaccines is usually covered. Children age 18 and younger may be eligible to get vaccines for free through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program if they are: Medicaid eligible; uninsured; or American Indian or Alaska Native. Doctors can charge a fee to give each shot. However, VFC vaccines cannot be denied to an eligible child if the family cannot afford the fee. To learn more about the VFC program, visit the website at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/) or contact your State VFC Coordinator. A list of VFC Coordinators is available at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/contacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/contacts.htm).

For more information on vaccines, ask your child's healthcare provider or call  
**800-CDC-INFO** (800-232-4636)

Website: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/preteen/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/preteen/)

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