

Questions and answers for parents about pre-teen vaccines

Vaccines are not just for infants. As your kids get older, protection provided by some vaccines they received in childhood can begin to wear off. Kids can also develop risks for more diseases as they enter their pre-teen years. For these reasons, pre-teens need vaccinations too. The best time for your pre-teen to get these vaccines is at a health check up when they are **11 or 12 years old**.

Q: What are the pre-teen vaccines?

- A:**
- **Tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap)**
 - **Meningococcal conjugate vaccine**
 - **Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines**
 - **Influenza vaccine (flu vaccine)**

Tdap and meningococcal vaccines are recommended for all pre-teens. HPV vaccination is recommended for girls to prevent cervical cancer; boys and young men may choose to get this vaccine to prevent genital warts. Flu vaccines are recommended for everyone older than 6 months, including 11- and 12-year-olds. Pre-teens should also get the following vaccinations if they missed them during childhood: hepatitis B, measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), polio, and varicella (chickenpox).

Q: Why are these vaccines necessary?

- A:** These vaccines prevent serious, sometimes life-threatening diseases. As children move into adolescence they are at a higher risk for meningitis and HPV. For diseases like pertussis (whooping cough), the protection from vaccines received in childhood can wear off over time, so pre-teens need a booster shot, called Tdap. Flu vaccines are important because the flu can be serious even for healthy people.

Q: When should pre-teens be vaccinated?

- A:** Pre-teens can receive all of these vaccines during a health check-up when they are 11 or 12 years old. If your child missed that check-up or any vaccines, ask your child's doctor about getting the vaccines now.

Q: Are these vaccines safe and effective?

- A:** All of these vaccines have been extensively studied and are safe and effective. Pre-teens may experience mild side effects such as redness and soreness where they get the injection. These vaccines are recommended by the American Academy for Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Q: Can I get help paying for vaccines?

- A:** If you don't have insurance, or if it does not cover vaccines, the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program may be able to help. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides vaccines at no cost to doctors who serve eligible children. Children younger than 19 years of age are eligible for VFC vaccines if they are Medicaid-eligible, American Indian or Alaska Native, or have no health insurance. "Underinsured" children who have health insurance that does not cover vaccination can receive VFC vaccines through Federally Qualified Health Centers or Rural Health Centers. Parents of uninsured or underinsured children who receive vaccines at no cost through the VFC Program should check with their healthcare providers about possible administration fees that might apply. These fees help providers cover the costs that result from important services like storing the vaccines and paying staff members to give vaccines to patients. However, VFC vaccines cannot be denied to an eligible child if a family can't afford the fee. To learn more about the VFC program, visit the website at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/> or contact your State VFC Coordinator. A list of VFC Coordinators is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/contacts/.htm>

Ask your child's doctor about these vaccines today.

For more information on vaccines, ask your child's healthcare provider or call **800-CDC-INFO** (800-232-4636) Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/preteen/>



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