

# Protect Your Pre-Teen/Teen With Vaccines

As kids get older, protection from some childhood vaccines begins to wear off and risks from other diseases may develop. A health check-up (well visit) is the right time for pre-teens/teens to get the Tdap, meningococcal, and HPV vaccines. These vaccines are safe and effective and recommended by the American Academy for Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The best time to get these vaccines is at 11-12 years of age; however, if your teenager (13-18 years of age) has not yet received them, ask your healthcare provider about getting them now.

## DISEASES YOU CAN PREVENT WITH THE VACCINES RECOMMENDED FOR PRE-TEENS/TEENS:

### TETANUS, DIPHTHERIA, PERTUSSIS (Tdap)

#### DISEASE:

Pertussis (whooping cough) is one of the illnesses that can be prevented with Tdap. Pertussis is very contagious and can cause prolonged, sometimes extreme, coughing. While adolescents usually do not get as sick from pertussis as young children, coughing fits can still take place for 10 weeks or more. If pertussis is transmitted to infants, it can be life-threatening. Also, more than half of infants under the age of 1 who get pertussis must be hospitalized.

#### VACCINE:

Tdap vaccine is available for protection against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. Getting this booster not only protects your pre-teen/teen, but also those around them, such as infants who are too young to be fully vaccinated. Young children are protected when they get the DTaP vaccine, but since protection wears off as kids get older, a booster shot known as Tdap is needed at 11-12 years of age. If your teenager (13-18 years) has not gotten the Tdap vaccine, ask his/her healthcare provider about getting it now.

### MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

#### DISEASE:

Meningococcal meningitis is inflammation of the lining around the brain and spinal cord that is caused by a very serious bacterial infection. This infection can lead to brain damage, hearing loss, learning disabilities and even death. In addition to death, other types of meningococcal disease can lead to loss of an arm or leg.

#### VACCINE:

Meningococcal conjugate vaccine protects against the bacteria that is one of the causes of meningitis. All pre-teen and teens, ages 11 through 18, should get the meningococcal conjugate vaccine. A health check-up at ages 11 or 12 is the best time for adolescents to receive this vaccine. A booster dose is recommended at 16 years of age. If your teenager missed getting the vaccine, ask his/her healthcare provider about getting it now, especially if your teenager is about to move into a college dorm.

### HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV) DISEASE

#### DISEASE:

HPV is a very common virus; about 20 million people are infected with HPV, most in their teens and early 20s. Some types of HPV can cause several types of cancer (cervical, anal, oropharyngeal, and penile). Other types can cause genital warts. Each year about 12,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and about 4,000 women die from it in the US. HPV disease is spread through sexual contact; therefore, the best time to protect your pre-teen/teen is before they could be exposed to the virus (before their first sexual contact).

#### VACCINE:

Two HPV vaccines, HPV2 and HPV4, are available to protect against HPV types that cause most cervical cancer. Either of these vaccines is recommended for girls at ages 11 and 12. HPV4 vaccine is recommended for all boys, also at 11-12 years of age. All preteens and teens should get 3 doses of an HPV vaccine. It is very important to complete all of the shots before the first sexual contact, so there is time to develop protection from the vaccine. If your teenager or young adult child has not gotten any or all of the HPV shots when they were younger, ask his/her healthcare provider about getting them now.

### INFLUENZA (FLU) VACCINE

#### DISEASE:

The flu is a contagious infection of the nose, throat and lungs that is caused by a virus. Most people sick with the flu will recover in a few days to less than two weeks. Pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections are three examples of complications from flu. Kids with chronic health problems like asthma and diabetes are at especially high risk of developing serious flu complications. Children may pass the virus to others for more than seven days.

#### VACCINE:

Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every year. It is very important for children with asthma or diabetes to get vaccinated to help decrease their risk of severe flu illness. Pre-teens/teens should get a flu vaccine in September or as soon as it is available each year.

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

[www.scdhec.gov/scimmunize](http://www.scdhec.gov/scimmunize)

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 these vaccines through the Vaccines For Children (VFC) program if they: have Medicaid; have no insurance; have private health insurance, but the policy does not cover vaccines; or are American Indian or Alaskan Native.* Ask your healthcare provider or call the **SC VFC Program at 1-800-27-SHOTS** for more information about the Vaccines for Children program.

