

# Questions and Answers for Parents About Preteen and Teen Vaccines

**S**hots are not just for babies. As children get older, the protection provided by childhood shots can wear off. Children also develop risks for more diseases as they enter their preteen and teen years. For these reasons, they need shots too.

**Q: What shots do preteens and teens need? Q: When should my child get these shots?**

**A: Tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine**

This shot protects against whooping cough, or pertussis, which causes severe coughing fits. The coughing fits can be so bad that preteens and teens can miss weeks of school and social activities. They can even break a rib from coughing. Whooping cough spreads very easily. It can be passed on to infants, who can die from it. This shot also protects against tetanus and diphtheria.

**Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV)**

This shot protects against meningococcal meningitis. Meningococcal disease can become deadly in 48 hours or less, even with treatment. Some survivors will have a long term disability such as deafness, brain damage or an amputated limb.

**Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine**

This shot protects against the types of HPV that most commonly cause cervical cancer. Each year in the United States, about 12,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and about 4,000 women die from it. One of the HPV vaccines can also protect both females and males from the types of HPV that cause most genital warts and anal cancer.

**Influenza (flu) vaccine**

This shot protects against the flu. The flu is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs that is caused by the flu virus. Most people with the flu are sick for about a week, but then feel better. But flu is unpredictable and some people can get very sick and some can die.

**A:** Everyone over 6 months old should receive a flu vaccine every year. Preteens should get the other shots (Tdap, MCV and HPV vaccine) when they are 11 or 12 years old. Teens also need a second, or booster, shot of the meningococcal conjugate vaccine. If your child missed getting these shots, ask your child's doctor about getting the shots now.

**Q: Are these vaccines safe and effective?**

**A:** All of these shots have been widely studied and are safe and effective. Preteens and teens may experience mild side effects such as redness and soreness in the area of the arm where they get the shot.

These shots are recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the Indian Health Service, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**Q: Can I get help paying for these shots?**

**A:** All IHS, tribal and urban Indian health clinics offer shots. So do many private doctors. American Indian/Alaska Native children younger than 19 years old can get shots for free through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. Check with your doctor or your local clinic.



**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: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens/)



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