CDC Handouts for Parents about Vaccines for Preteens and Teens

Flu Vaccine for Preteens and Teens

**Why does my child need the flu vaccine?**
The flu is a serious illness that can cause fever, cough, and muscle aches. It affects millions of people each year. Some people can get very sick from the flu and need hospitalization. The flu can spread quickly among people living in close contact, especially those in crowded settings.

**Where can my child get a flu shot?**
Flu vaccines are available from doctors, pharmacies, urgent care clinics, grocery stores, and schools.

**What else should I know?**
- The flu shot will not cause the flu or make it worse. A person can get the flu from coughing or sneezing around someone who has the flu.
- Flu vaccines can take up to two weeks to work. A person can get the flu from someone else before the vaccine is fully effective.
- Flu vaccines do not cause the flu. They contain a killed or dead virus, which is not the same as the live virus that can cause illness. Some people do not develop any symptoms after getting the vaccine, but they are still safe and effective. They cannot cause the flu. The flu vaccine does not cause side effects, but some shots may cause soreness or redness in the arm where the shot was given.

Meningococcal Vaccine for Preteens and Teens

**Why does my child need meningococcal vaccine?**
Meningococcal disease is an infection of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord. The meningococcal vaccine protects against 4 types of meningococcal disease.

**When should my child get meningococcal vaccine?**
- Preteens: the meningococcal vaccine should be given when the child is 11 or 12 years old. If the child is also getting the Tdap vaccine, the MCV4 should be given at the same time. The Tdap vaccine can help prevent tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.
- Teens: the meningococcal vaccine should be given when the child is 13 to 16 years old. If the child is also getting the Tdap vaccine, the MCV4 should be given at the same time.

HPV Vaccine for Preteens and Teens

**Why does my child need HPV vaccine?**
HPV is a very common virus that can cause many different diseases, including cervical cancer. HPV vaccines are available for preteens and teens.

**Where can my child get HPV vaccine?**
HPV vaccines are available from doctors, pharmacies, urgent care clinics, grocery stores, and schools.

**What else should I know?**
- The HPV vaccine should be given before a person becomes sexually active. It is not too late to give the vaccine to a person who has already had sex. Most vaccines can be given to adults and children 19 years and older.
- HPV vaccines can prevent certain cancers caused by HPV. They also help prevent genital warts caused by HPV.

Tdap Vaccine for Preteens and Teens

**Why does my child need Tdap vaccine?**
The Tdap vaccine protects against 3 diseases: pertussis, tetanus, and diphtheria. It can replace the DTaP vaccine, which is given to children. The Tdap vaccine is given to preteens and teens who have not had a whooping cough vaccine. It helps protect against whooping cough, which can be very serious for unvaccinated children.

**Where can my child get Tdap vaccine?**
Tdap vaccines are available from doctors, pharmacies, urgent care clinics, grocery stores, and schools.

**What else should I know?**
- The Tdap vaccine should be given when the child is 11 to 12 years old. If the child is also getting the MCV4 vaccine, the Tdap vaccine should be given at the same time. The Tdap vaccine can help prevent tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.
- Children who are 12 years old or older should get the Tdap vaccine when they receive their first dose of Tdap vaccine.

Vaccines for Preteens and Teens: What Parents Should Know

**Why does my child need vaccines now?**
Vaccines are important for preteens and teens because they are at higher risk of getting many diseases. Vaccines help protect against diseases that can cause serious illness, disability, and even death. Many vaccines are given at the same time to save time.

**What vaccines does my child need now?**
- Pneumococcal vaccine
- Tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (Tdap)
- Meningococcal vaccine
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine

**Where can I learn more?**
Talk to your child’s doctor or nurse about what vaccines your child may need. You can also find more information about CDC’s Vaccines for Preteens and Teens website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/trends/products/print-materials.html

Download these CDC fact sheets and additional resources—some in Spanish and other languages—at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/products/print-materials.html

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