

# CDC Handouts for Parents about Vaccines for Preteens and Teens

## Flu Vaccine for Preteens and Teens

| DISEASES and the VACCINES THAT PREVENT THEM |  
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

**Why does my child need this vaccine?**  
The flu is an illness of the respiratory system caused by influenza viruses. Flu can be spread by coughing or sneezing. Flu can also be spread in some cases by contact with someone who has the flu. Getting the flu vaccine can help prevent complications like pneumonia (a serious lung infection) and hospitalization. People with chronic health problems, such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease, may have more serious complications from the flu. The flu usually causes a fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue (tiredness), and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea. It can be especially dangerous for sick people.

**When should my child get this vaccine?**  
Preteens and teens (and everyone else) should get the flu vaccine in their community, flu clinic, office or clinic, and some health departments, pharmacies, and schools.

**What else should I know?**  
There are 2 flu vaccines to choose from:

- **The flu shot**, made as a shot that is usually given in the arm.
- **The nasal spray flu vaccine**, which is sprayed into the nose. Preteens and teens with asthma should NOT get the nasal spray flu vaccine. Talk to the doctor or nurse for your preteen or teen.

## Meningococcal Vaccine for Preteens and Teens

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**Why does my child need this vaccine?**  
The meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) protects against 4 types of meningococcal bacteria that doesn't happen very often when it does. Meningococcal infection can make a child feel very sick and can lead to death. It can also cause sepsis, which is a serious infection that can lead to death. Meningococcal disease can also cause meningitis, which is inflammation of the lining around the brain and spinal cord. Meningococcal disease can be fatal. The bacteria that cause meningococcal disease can live in the nose and throat of people who have close or long-term contact, like living in the same place. People who have a higher risk for meningococcal disease should get the MCV4 shot as soon as possible.

**When should my child get this vaccine?**  
The HPV vaccine is recommended for girls at age 11 or 12 so they are protected before they are exposed to the virus. If you wait until your child is older, they may not get the vaccine. Talk to your doctor about when to get the vaccine.

**What else should I know?**  
There are two HPV vaccines. One is for girls and the other is for boys. Both HPV vaccines have been shown to be safe and effective. They can cause mild side effects, like soreness or redness where the shot was given. Some preteens and teens might faint after getting a shot. Sitting or lying down when getting a shot and then for about 15 minutes after the shot, can help prevent fainting. Serious side effects are rare. It is very important to tell the doctor or nurse if your child has any serious allergies, including allergies to yeast, latex or chicken eggs, before they receive any shots.

## HPV Vaccine for Preteens and Teens

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**Why does my child need this vaccine?**  
This vaccine is for protection against human papillomavirus (HPV), a very common virus that causes many types of cancer. HPV is a virus that is spread through sexual contact. About 80 million people, including 20 million women and 20 million men, have HPV. HPV can cause throat cancer and cancer of the cervix, penis, and anus.

**When should my child get this vaccine?**  
The HPV vaccine is recommended for girls at age 11 or 12 so they are protected before they are exposed to the virus. If you wait until your child is older, they may not get the vaccine. Talk to your doctor about when to get the vaccine.

**What else should I know?**  
There are two HPV vaccines. One is for girls and the other is for boys. Both HPV vaccines have been shown to be safe and effective. They can cause mild side effects, like soreness or redness where the shot was given. Some preteens and teens might faint after getting a shot. Sitting or lying down when getting a shot and then for about 15 minutes after the shot, can help prevent fainting. Serious side effects are rare. It is very important to tell the doctor or nurse if your child has any serious allergies, including allergies to yeast, latex or chicken eggs, before they receive any shots.

## Tdap Vaccine for Preteens and Teens

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**Why does my child need this vaccine?**  
Babies and little kids get vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough). But as kids get older, the protection from these vaccines wears off. This is why it's important to get a booster shot (Tdap) vaccine. The Tdap vaccine is a booster shot for tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.

**When should my child get this vaccine?**  
The Tdap vaccine is given once. It is given to children who have not had a tetanus shot in the last 10 years. Older teens who haven't gotten any MCV4 shots should get it as soon as possible.

**What else should I know?**  
There are two HPV vaccines. One is for girls and the other is for boys. Both HPV vaccines have been shown to be safe and effective. They can cause mild side effects, like soreness or redness where the shot was given. Some preteens and teens might faint after getting a shot. Sitting or lying down when getting a shot and then for about 15 minutes after the shot, can help prevent fainting. Serious side effects are rare. It is very important to tell the doctor or nurse if your child has any serious allergies, including allergies to yeast, latex or chicken eggs, before they receive any shots.

## Vaccines for Preteens and Teens: What Parents Should Know

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**Why does my child need vaccines now?**  
Vaccines aren't just for babies. Some of the vaccines that babies get can wear off as kids get older. And as kids grow up they may come in contact with different diseases than when they were babies. There are vaccines that can help protect your preteen or teen from these other illnesses.

**When should my child be vaccinated?**  
A good time to get these vaccines is during a yearly health checkup. Your preteen or teen can also get these vaccines at a physical exam required for sports, school, or camp. It's a good idea to ask the doctor or nurse every year if there are any vaccines that your child may need.

**What else should I know about these vaccines?**  
These vaccines have all been studied very carefully and are safe and effective. They can cause mild side effects, like soreness or redness where the shot was given. Some preteens and teens might faint after getting a shot. Sitting or lying down when getting a shot and then for about 15 minutes after the shot, can help prevent fainting. Serious side effects are rare. It is very important to tell the doctor or nurse if your child has any serious allergies, including allergies to yeast, latex or chicken eggs, before they receive any shots.

**How can I get help paying for these vaccines?**  
The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides vaccines for children ages 18 years and younger, who are not insured or under-insured, Medicaid-eligible, American Indian or Alaska Native. You can find out more about the VFC program by going online to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and typing VFC in the search box.

**Where can I learn more?**  
Talk to your child's doctor or nurse about what vaccines they may need. You can also find more information about CDC's Vaccines for Preteens and Teens website at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens).



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/products/print-materials.html)