



# Adolescence – A Time for Vaccinations

Thursday, January 28, 2021



## Adolescent Health Concerns

For many people in the U.S., adolescence is one of the healthiest times of life. Most parents hope to keep it that way for their young children and teenagers as they progress to young adulthood. The World Health Organization widely defines adolescence as a period of time that begins at the start of puberty and ends when an adult identity and behavior are accepted. Though the timing and extent of these changes may vary among young people, they usually happen from the ages of 10 to 19 years.

But along with rapid physical, intellectual, and emotional development, adolescents may also face a number of health concerns. One important way to help your adolescent be

healthy is to keep up to date with his or her vaccinations.

## Adolescence Is a Time for Vaccinations

Vaccines are sometimes a forgotten part of adolescent health. Many people think of vaccines as protection for babies and young children. Yet, specific vaccines as well as booster doses of some childhood vaccines are recommended during adolescence to continue protection. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), these vaccines include the following:

**Tdap vaccine** protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough). Adolescents should get the vaccine at age 11 or 12 years old. If your child didn't get the vaccination at that age, talk with their healthcare provider about getting it now.

**Meningococcal vaccine** protects against some types of the bacteria that can cause meningitis (swelling of the lining that surrounds the brain and spinal cord) and a type of blood infection. Adolescents should receive meningococcal vaccinations at 11 or 12 years old and also at 16 years old. There are five common types of bacteria—groups A, B, C, W, and Y—that can cause the majority of this uncommon but potentially deadly disease, and there are two separate vaccines in the U.S. that help protect against different groups of meningococcal disease: One vaccine that helps protect against groups A, C, W and Y, and a different one that helps protect against group B. **HPV (human papillomavirus)**

**vaccine** helps protect both female and male adolescents from HPV infection and cancer caused by HPV. All 11- and 12-year-olds should get two shots of the vaccine 6 months to 1 year apart. If your child didn't get the vaccinations at that age, talk with their healthcare provider about getting it now. **Flu vaccine** is recommended to help prevent getting the flu. All adolescents should get the vaccine every year. Yearly flu vaccination is needed because the viruses that cause the flu can be different from year to year.

View a complete list of recommended vaccinations for children 7 years through 18 years of age [here](#).

## Encouraging New Experiences

Adolescents are often in new environments for the first time, trying new things and meeting new people. It is important to emphasize general safety guidelines without causing unnecessary fear. These may include:

Covering their mouth when coughing or sneezing. Washing their hands frequently. If soap and water aren't available, using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Not sharing eating utensils, drinks and food, or toothbrushes and lip balms.

It's important for parents to help their adolescents understand how to be as healthy as possible. This includes getting vaccinated as recommended by their healthcare provider.

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9]

## References

**1.** Healthypeople.gov. Adolescent Health. Accessed September 24, 2018. **2.** World Health Organization. HIV/AIDS. Accessed September 21, 2018. **3.** Fox H, McManus M. Health Reform and Adolescents. Accessed September 21, 2018. **4.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccines for Your Children: Protect Your Child at Every Age. Accessed September 21, 2018. **5.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccines for Preteens: What Parents Should Know. Accessed September 21, 2018. **6.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Meningococcal Vaccines for Preteens, Teens. Accessed October 4, 2018. **7.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Key Facts About Seasonal Flu Vaccine. Accessed September 21, 2018. **8.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. When & How to Wash Your Hands. Accessed September 24, 2018. **9.** Mayo Clinic. Meningitis. Accessed September 24, 2018.

Originally published, Thursday, January 28, 2021