

Questions and Answers for Parents about Pre-Teen vaccines

Vaccines are not just for infants. As your kids get older, protection provided by some vaccines they received in childhood can begin to wear off. Kids can also develop risks for more diseases as they enter their pre-teen years. For these reasons, pre-teens need vaccinations too. The best time for your pre-teen to get these vaccines is at a health check-up when they are 11 or 12 years old.

Q: What are the Pre-teen vaccines?

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

Meningococcal conjugate vaccine

Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines

Influenza vaccine (flu vaccine)

Tdap and meningococcal vaccines are recommended for all pre-teens. **HPV** vaccination is recommended for girls to prevent cervical cancer; boys and young men may choose to get this vaccine to prevent genital warts. **Flu** vaccines are recommended for everyone older than 6 months, including 11 and 12 year olds. Pre-teens should also get the following vaccinations if they missed them during childhood: **hepatitis B, measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), polio, and varicella (chickenpox).**

Q: Why are these vaccines necessary?

A: These vaccines prevent serious, sometimes life-threatening diseases. As children move into adolescence they are at a higher risk for **meningitis** and **HPV**. For diseases like **pertussis (whooping cough)**, the protection from vaccines received in childhood can wear off over time, so pre-teens need a booster shot, called Tdap. **Flu** vaccines are important because the flu can be serious for healthy people.

Q: When should pre-teens be vaccinated?

A: Pre-teens can receive all of these vaccines during a health check-up when they are 11 or 12 years old. If your child missed that check-up or any vaccines, ask your child's doctor about getting the vaccines now.

Q: Are these vaccines safe and effective?

A: All of these vaccines have been extensively studied and are safe and effective. Pre-teens may experience mild side effects such as redness and soreness where they get the injection.

Q: Can I get help paying for vaccines?

A: If you do not have insurance, or if it does not cover vaccines, the Vaccines For Children (VFC) program may be able to help. The Vaccines For Children (VFC) program provides vaccines at no cost to health care providers who serve eligible children.

**Contact the Monmouth County Health Department at 732-431-7456
for more information about the VFC Program**