

**AAP News** Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

**Rx for a healthy teen: Keep up with recommended vaccines**

When your adolescent was an infant, you did your best to visit the pediatrician on time for recommended immunizations. As a preteen or teen, your child still needs protection from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Starting at ages 11-12, adolescents are eligible to receive three to four vaccines, and additional vaccines if they are high-risk patients or behind schedule. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports the Recommended Schedule for Persons Aged 7 through 18 Years — United States, which includes the following important vaccines.

**Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine**

You can help prevent certain forms of cancer later in life by vaccinating your child now. The three-dose HPV vaccine series, recommended for adolescent girls, protects against cervical cancer and genital warts. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will soon recommend the vaccine for boys as well.

**Meningococcal vaccine**

The meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) protects against bacteria that can cause bloodstream, brain and spinal cord infections. MCV4 is recommended at age 11 or 12, and a booster shot is recommended at age 16 to continue providing protection when risk for meningococcal disease is highest. The potentially deadly disease is most common in crowded settings such as college dorms and military barracks.

**Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis vaccine**

The tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis vaccine (Tdap) prevents outbreaks of pertussis, also known as whooping cough.



Pertussis is especially deadly for babies, and vaccinating adolescents helps prevent the spread of disease in the community. The vaccine also provides a booster shot against tetanus (lockjaw), which causes stiffening of the muscles when it enters the body through a cut in the skin. The vaccine protects against diphtheria, a bacterial respiratory disease, as well.

**Influenza vaccine**

Flu vaccine is recommended yearly for practically everyone 6 months of age and older. Parents should talk with their pediatrician if they have questions or concerns about whether their child should receive the inactivated or live attenuated (weakened) influenza vaccine.

**Retaining records**

When college-bound or after they leave home, adolescents should keep a copy of their immunization records with them. To locate records, contact your pediatrician's office. Other sources that may have this information include schools attended by the child and state immunization registries.

— Trisha Koriath

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