

Pre-Teen Vaccine FAQ

What should parents know about the recommended vaccinations for pre-teenagers (ages 11 through 12)? Do pre-teenagers even need any additional vaccinations? Are there any risks involved with these vaccines? Keep reading to learn more about pre-teen vaccines.

Q. Why does my pre-teen need more vaccinations if they were vaccinated as a baby?

A. As protection from childhood vaccines wears off, pre-teens need certain vaccines that will extend that protection as well as receive protection from additional infections.

Q. What vaccines are recommended for pre-teens?

A. Early adolescents need to receive three essential vaccines to protect them throughout their teen years and into adulthood.

1. Human papillomavirus (HPV)- this vaccine protects against infections that can cause certain cancers as well as genital warts
 - The HPV vaccine is a series of vaccines that must be completed to be fully effective
2. Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap)- the Tdap vaccine provides protection against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (also known as whooping cough)
3. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine- protects against meningococcal disease. Meningococcal disease can lead to meningitis which is a potentially deadly infection of the brain and spinal cord

Besides these three vaccines, your child should also receive a seasonal flu vaccine annually

Q. What are the risks involved with these vaccinations?

A. First, it is important to discuss your concerns regarding vaccine safety with your child's doctor or a Public Health Nurse at your local health department. Like any medication, vaccines can cause side effects. The most common side effects that children experience (such as redness or swelling at the injection site) are almost always minor and will resolve on their own in a couple of days. Serious side effects (such as a severe allergic reaction) are very rare. If you see anything concerning about child after receiving a vaccine, contact your doctor or health department immediately.

Q. Do vaccines cause autism?

A. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has done extensive research on vaccines and vaccine ingredients regarding any correlation with developing Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). No link between vaccines and autism has been identified.

Q. How should you prepare your pre-teen for their vaccinations?

A. Be honest with your child and explain that the vaccination may pinch or sting, but the pain won't last for very long. Remind your child that vaccines are what can keep us healthy. Keep the experience positive.