

# Preteens Need Additional Immunizations

Preteens (11 and 12 year olds) need additional immunizations. These vaccines protect against serious diseases including whooping cough, meningococcal meningitis and cervical cancer. In addition, these vaccine extend the protection of infant and childhood vaccines. Preteens may also need to catch-up on immunizations that may have been missed. Most of the newer preteen immunizations are not covered under the California School Immunization Law, so are not required for school entry. However, it is very important that preteens be protected against these potentially very serious diseases. Let's look at the immunizations preteens need.

**Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV).** Only one shot is needed to protect against this devastating disease. Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria that can infect the blood or areas around the brain and spinal cord. Although the disease is rare, it can lead to brain damage, disability, and rapid death. MCV protects against four of the five most common groups of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease. The vaccine is recommended at 11 or 12 years of age. Older teens and college freshmen living in dorms should also get this vaccine if they missed getting it as preteens. For more information see: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-mening.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-mening.pdf).

**Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis Vaccine (Tdap).** The Tdap vaccine is recommended as a one time single booster dose for preteens and for teens who missed it as preteens to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough ). The protection received from immunization as an infant wanes over time so vaccination is needed for pre-teens, as well as older teens who missed being vaccinated. Whooping cough can cause severe coughing that leads to vomiting and can be so severe it can break ribs. It can cause pneumonia that requires hospitalization and may cause the preteen to miss weeks of school. Whooping cough is especially dangerous for babies who can catch it from a coughing person. After the Tdap immunization, a booster dose of tetanus-diphtheria vaccine (Td) is needed every 10 years. For more information see: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-td-tdap.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-td-tdap.pdf)

**Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV4 or HPV2).** Preteen girls and older teen girls who have not been vaccinated need 3 doses of HPV4 or HPV2 vaccine given over a six-month period to protect against the two types of HPV that cause most cases of cervical cancer and pre-cancer. The HPV4 vaccine also protects both sexes against the two types of HPV that cause most cases of genital warts. Preteen and older boys should consider getting 3 doses of HPV4 vaccine over a six month period to decrease their likelihood of getting genital warts. For more information see: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-hpv-gardasil.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-hpv-gardasil.pdf) and [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-hpv-cervarix.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-hpv-cervarix.pdf).

**Varicella (Chickenpox) Vaccine (VZV).** Two doses of varicella vaccine are recommended for everyone who has not had chickenpox, as diagnosed by a doctor. Two doses provide better protection against chickenpox than one dose. Preteens who have never had the chickenpox and have not yet received two doses should be vaccinated. Chickenpox disease is frequently more severe in teens and adults and can lead to severe skin infections, scars, pneumonia, brain damage, or rarely death. For more information see: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-varicella.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-varicella.pdf).

**Hepatitis A Vaccine (HAV).** Two vaccine doses separated by 6 months have been recommended since 1999 for all children through 18 years of age living in states with increased rates of hepatitis A disease, including California. However many California preteens and teens have not received this vaccine. Hepatitis A disease frequently does not cause symptoms in children, but adults can be very ill with jaundice, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and about 15% of people infected with hepatitis A virus will have drawn out or returning symptoms over a 6-9 month period. Even though children may not always feel sick when they have hepatitis A, they can spread it to other people. For more information see: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-hep-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-hep-a.pdf).

**Hepatitis B Vaccine (HBV).** Three doses of hepatitis B vaccine in a 6-month period are needed. Many preteens have had this vaccine as it has been routinely recommended for infants since 1991. However, if it was missed, it should be received now, as it is required for 7<sup>th</sup> grade entry under the California School Immunization Law. Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver. The hepatitis B virus can cause lifelong infection, cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death. For more information see: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-hep-b.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-hep-b.pdf).

**Influenza Vaccine (Flu).** Preteens and teens should receive a flu vaccine every year in the fall. Flu vaccines are routinely recommended for all individuals over 6 months of age and are especially important for preteens with health conditions such as asthma or diabetes, that increase their risk for influenza complications. It is also important that preteens and teens who live in households with persons who are more likely to have flu complications, such as the elderly or infants, receive a yearly influenza immunization. Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. For more information see: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-flu.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-flu.pdf) and [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-fluive.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-fluive.pdf).

**Preteen health care visits at age 11 or 12 years are key to a healthy start for adolescents. In addition to getting needed immunizations, it is the perfect time for parents and preteens to talk to the doctor about ways for the preteen to stay healthy, including eating right, being active, and standing up to peer pressure.**