

Get Your Teen Back on Track with Vaccines Missed During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Now is a great time to schedule an appointment for your teen to get caught up on vaccines. They may have missed some vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic. As children get older, they can be exposed to other serious diseases and they lose protection from vaccines they got when they were younger. This is why it is so important to get recommended vaccines for teens.

There are three vaccines recommended for 11- and 12-year-olds: tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap), human papillomavirus (HPV), and meningococcal vaccine. Tdap vaccine protects against pertussis (whooping cough), human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine protects against six types of cancer, and meningococcal vaccine protects against meningitis. Sixteen-year-olds need a booster dose of meningococcal (MenACWY) vaccine and they may need another type of meningococcal vaccine (MenB).

Teens 12 years and older should also get a COVID-19 vaccine authorized for their age group. It is important for kids to get vaccinated before going back to school, sports, or other activities this fall to protect them and people around them who cannot get vaccinated. Getting vaccinated for COVID-19 means kids won't have to miss school, sports, or other activities due to quarantine and won't have to get tested regularly. Teens can get all the shots they need on the same day.

These vaccines have all been studied and are safe and effective at preventing severe diseases. They can cause mild side effects, like a sore arm where the shot was given. If you have questions or concerns about the vaccines that are recommended for your child, talk to their health care provider.

Go to Immunization: Me and My Family (health.state.mn.us/vaxontrack) to learn about:

- Find My Immunization Record: Learn what vaccines your child received and what they still need.
- Where to Get Vaccinated: If your teen does not have health insurance or a health care provider, find a clinic that offers free or low-cost vaccines.

If you do not have internet or mobile access to the resources provided, call the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-5414.