



## CATCH-UP IMMUNIZATIONS FOR ADOLESCENTS

Did your preteen get all the vaccines recommended for infants and young children? If by 11-12 years of age your child has not been vaccinated or has been only partially vaccinated against certain diseases, a “catch-up” vaccine is necessary.

Ask your doctor if you think your child may have missed these important, potentially life-saving vaccinations. It’s not too late.

### *At-a-Glance*

#### Catch-Up Immunizations for Adolescents

Health officials recommend that all adolescents get their catch-up vaccines for chickenpox, measles, mumps, rubella, polio and hepatitis B if they were not vaccinated or fully vaccinated as a child.

**Disease**

Varicella (chickenpox)  
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)  
Polio  
Hepatitis B

**Vaccine**

Varicella  
MMR  
Inactivated polio vaccine (IPV)  
Hep B

To access the full CDC schedule for adolescents, go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/>

### Varicella (chickenpox)

While most people have heard about chickenpox, many do not realize how serious it can be. Complications from the disease are usually minor for an otherwise healthy kid, but the virus can be much more severe in adolescents, adults and in children with certain cancers or with impaired immune systems. Chickenpox can lead to bacterial infection of the skin from lesions, swelling of the brain and pneumonia.

Chickenpox is caused by a herpes virus called varicella zoster. It causes an outbreak of itchy skin blisters on the face, chest, back and other body parts, and can also cause flu-like symptoms. Once infected, the virus stays in the body, sometimes suddenly reactivating in adulthood causing shingles, a very painful condition.

Chickenpox spreads from person to person by coughing and sneezing, and by coming into contact with skin lesions. Risk of catching it is highest among children in school where there is an increased chance of coming into contact with other infected children.

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## What are the symptoms?

Chickenpox has characteristic itchy red spots, which then form into blisters that crust and become scabs. Some people also have a fever. During an attack, chickenpox can cause anywhere from just a few lesions to more than 500 lesions on a person's body. Symptoms usually go away without treatment, but because the infection is so contagious, a sick child should stay home and rest until the symptoms are gone.

## What is the “catch-up” vaccination schedule for adolescents?

Anyone who has had chickenpox is immune and won't get it again, but adolescents who were not fully vaccinated as children or who never had chickenpox need to be vaccinated and should get two doses of the vaccine. If there is any doubt that your child ever had chickenpox, it's best to vaccinate. There is no harm in vaccinating a child who is already immune.

## Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)

These three diseases can be prevented with one vaccine called MMR. All three can spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Surfaces and items touched by an infected person, such as a drinking glass or computer keyboard, can also become contaminated.

- *Measles* is a respiratory infection caused by a virus. It can start with high fever, hacking cough, runny nose and red eyes followed by a full-body rash. The rash usually appears on the forehead then spreads downward over the face to the chest, arms and legs. Small red spots with blue and white centers also appear inside the mouth. Some older children infected with the virus suffer from inflammation of the brain, which can cause seizures and permanent brain damage.
- *Mumps* is typically associated with the characteristic puffy cheeks from swollen salivary glands, but it can cause other serious problems including meningitis (infection of the brain and spinal cord covering), swelling of the testicles, breasts or ovaries, and in rare cases, death. Anyone can get mumps, but it usually strikes children and adolescents. Other symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness and loss of appetite.
- *Rubella* is also known as German measles. Most older children with the disease recover quickly, usually after experiencing a mild rash on the face, swelling of glands behind the ears and fever. Adults and especially pregnant women are at greater risk for complications that can be devastating. If rubella is contracted in early pregnancy, the baby may have a birth defect such as blindness, deafness, heart defects or mental retardation. Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect oneself as well as others.

## What is the “catch-up” vaccination schedule for adolescents?

If your preteen wasn't already vaccinated, ask your doctor about getting it now. Adolescents who were not previously vaccinated should get two doses; those who only received one dose previously, should get the second dose (with at least 28 days between doses).

## Polio

Polio is caused by a virus that enters the body through the mouth and multiplies in the intestine. Not everyone who gets polio has symptoms, but for a small percentage (about one percent) it can cause total paralysis in a matter of hours.

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Because of the success of the polio vaccine program over the years in eliminating the disease from the U.S., it's easy to think we don't need to worry about it anymore. However, the poliovirus still exists in some parts of the world. Anyone who becomes infected can carry the virus from one country to another. Getting vaccinated is the only way to stay protected from polio.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Milder symptoms can include sore throat, fever, nausea and vomiting. Some experience stiffness in the neck, back or legs. Polio can cause paralysis, usually in the legs. In some cases, the poliovirus will paralyze the muscles used to breathe, causing the infected person to be unable to breathe on his or her own, resulting in death.

### **What is the “catch-up” vaccination schedule for adolescents?**

Anyone who did not receive a complete vaccine series as a child should complete the three-dose series as soon as possible.

## **Hepatitis B (Hep B)**

Hepatitis B is 100 times more infectious than the AIDS virus. Although it is vaccine-preventable, 5,000 people in the U.S. will die each year from hepatitis B and its complications, and up to 100,000 people will become infected.

Hepatitis B is caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV) that attacks the liver. Most HBV infections occur in adolescents and adults. It is usually spread through contact with infectious blood, semen and other body fluids, including unprotected sex and by sharing infected needles, razors and toothbrushes. In addition, women with HBV can pass it on to their babies during childbirth.

There are two kinds of hepatitis B: acute and chronic. Acute hepatitis B is a short-term illness that is more common among adults. In some people, typically infants and children, acute HBV infection can become chronic, leading to cirrhosis, a condition that causes permanent liver damage, liver failure or liver cancer.

### **What are the symptoms?**

More than half of the people infected with HBV show no symptoms at all. Because of this, it can easily spread to others unknowingly. Those who do have symptoms may experience loss of appetite, fatigue, nausea, jaundice (yellow eyes and skin), joint pain and skin rashes.

### **What is the “catch-up” vaccination schedule for adolescents?**

Children through 10 years of age who did not receive their three-shot series as a child should be given the vaccine as soon as possible.