

Are you a parent of a pre-teen/teenager?



If so, you need to know about an important immunization recommendation.

Q. What is the immunization recommendation?

- A.** A booster dose of Tdap vaccine is strongly recommended for your pre-teen/teen.

Q. What is Tdap?

- A.** Tdap is a combination of three vaccines that provides protection against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough).

Q. Why does my child need this vaccine?

- A.** There has been an increase in whooping cough in the U.S. in recent years. Most children are fully protected against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis prior to entering kindergarten because of the DTaP vaccine. However, protection against these diseases decreases after about 10 years. By giving adolescents a booster dose of Tdap, they will receive protection against these diseases for the years to come.

Q. Is the vaccine safe and effective?

- A.** Yes. The most common side effects are pain and swelling at the site of injection. While the vaccine does not cause serious side effects, some people feel tired or experience headaches. Tdap has been shown to decrease the incidence of pertussis by 90 percent.

Q. Where can I get this vaccine? How much will it cost?

- A.** You can get the Tdap vaccine at your healthcare provider's office or local public health department. For families with health insurance, all or most of the cost of vaccines is usually covered. In South Carolina children age 18 and younger may be able to get vaccines for free through the Vaccine Assurance for All Children (VAFAC) program if they are covered by Medicaid, uninsured, underinsured, or American Indian or Alaskan Native. Doctors can charge a fee to give each shot. However, under VAFAC vaccines cannot be denied to an eligible child if the family cannot afford the fee. To learn more about the VAFAC, visit the Frequently Asked Immunization Questions at: <http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/immunization/faq.htm> or call 1-800-27-SHOTS.

Q. If my child got a vaccine called Td does he/she still need the Tdap vaccine?

- A.** Maybe. Td is the vaccine to prevent tetanus and diphtheria. Tdap provides additional protection against pertussis (commonly called whooping cough). If it has been more than five years since your child received a dose of a tetanus/diphtheria-containing vaccine, he/she will need a dose of Tdap.

Q. What should I do next?

- A.** Contact your child's health care provider or local public health department to schedule an appointment to receive a dose of Tdap if your child has not received Td or Tdap within the past five years.

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Q. Are there any other shots my child should get?

- A.** Yes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following vaccines for this pre-teens and teens :
- Meningococcal;
 - Human Papillomavirus (HPV);
 - Influenza; and
 - A second dose of varicella (chickenpox)

The above vaccines are not required by law, but are strongly recommended. For more information about these vaccines, talk with your child's health care provider.

Q. What if my child is uninsured? How can I get help paying for vaccine administration fees?

- A.** Your child may be eligible through the Vaccine Assurance For All Children program (for children and teens under 19 years of age). You can call the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's Immunization Division at 1-800-27-SHOTS (74687) for more information.

Q. How can I learn more?

- A.** Talk to your school's nurse, your healthcare provider or your local public health department. You can also call the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's Immunization Division at 1-800-27-SHOTS (74687) for more information.