



## 10 Reasons To Be Vaccinated

- 1 Vaccine-preventable diseases haven't gone away.**

The viruses and bacteria that cause infectious diseases and deaths still exist and can be passed on to people who are not immunized. For instance, adolescents who were vaccinated in early childhood, but whose immunity has waned, are common transmitters of the pertussis infection to infants. In recent years, the US has experienced the greatest number of pertussis (whooping cough) cases since 1959. Pertussis was responsible for the deaths of 10 infants in California in 2010; in 2012, outbreaks were reported in a majority of states with more than 32,000 cases and 16 deaths, most of which were in infants.
- 2 Vaccines will help keep you healthy.**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccinations from birth and at adolescence through adulthood to provide a lifetime of protection against many diseases and infections, such as meningitis, whooping cough, influenza, HPV (a virus that causes cancer), measles, mumps, rubella, and hepatitis A and B. Yet many adolescents are not vaccinated as recommended, leaving them needlessly vulnerable to disease, suffering, and death.
- 3 Vaccines are as important to your overall health as diet and exercise.**

Like eating healthy foods, being active, and getting regular checkups, vaccines play a vital role keeping all of us healthy, including pre-teens and teens. Vaccines are one of the simplest, safest, and most convenient preventive care measures available. Talk to your doctor about recommended vaccines specifically for adolescents.
- 4 Vaccination can mean the difference between life and death.**

Vaccine-preventable infections can be deadly. For example, meningococcal infection can spread quickly, killing an otherwise healthy adolescent in 48 hours.
- 5 Vaccines are safe and effective.**

Vaccines are among the safest medical products available and can prevent the suffering and costs associated with infectious diseases. The potential risks associated with the diseases that vaccines prevent are much greater than the potential risks from the vaccines themselves.
- 6 Vaccines won't cause the disease they are designed to prevent.**

People cannot "catch" the disease from the vaccine. Some vaccines contain "killed" virus, and it is impossible to get the disease from them. Others have live, but weakened, viruses designed to ensure that no one catches the disease.
- 7 Young and healthy people can get very sick, too.**

While infants and the elderly are usually at greater risk for serious infections and complications, vaccine-preventable diseases can strike anyone. Adolescence is a great time to check that earlier immunizations from infancy and childhood are up to date and to find out about the vaccines specifically recommended for this age group. We can stay healthy by preventing disease in the first place.
- 8 Vaccine-preventable diseases are expensive.**

Diseases not only have a direct impact on individuals and their families, but also carry a high price tag for society as a whole, exceeding \$10 billion per year in direct medical costs and indirect societal costs. Vaccines can lower costs. For example, US medical costs associated with chickenpox dropped from \$85 million to \$22 million after vaccination was introduced.
- 9 When adolescents get sick, those around them, including friends, babies, adults, and grandparents can get sick, too.**

In general, vaccine-preventable diseases are more serious for the very young and the very old. Getting vaccinated protects individuals and their family and friends.
- 10 Everyone deserves the opportunity to have a healthy life and future.**

Getting all adolescent vaccines is a great start for a healthy adulthood. But good vaccination practices should start much earlier. Pregnant women should be vaccinated against influenza (anytime during pregnancy) and whooping cough (during the second or third trimester). These vaccines protect the mother, her developing fetus, and help protect newborn babies.