

Frequently Asked Questions About Adolescent Vaccines

Can I get vaccines at school?

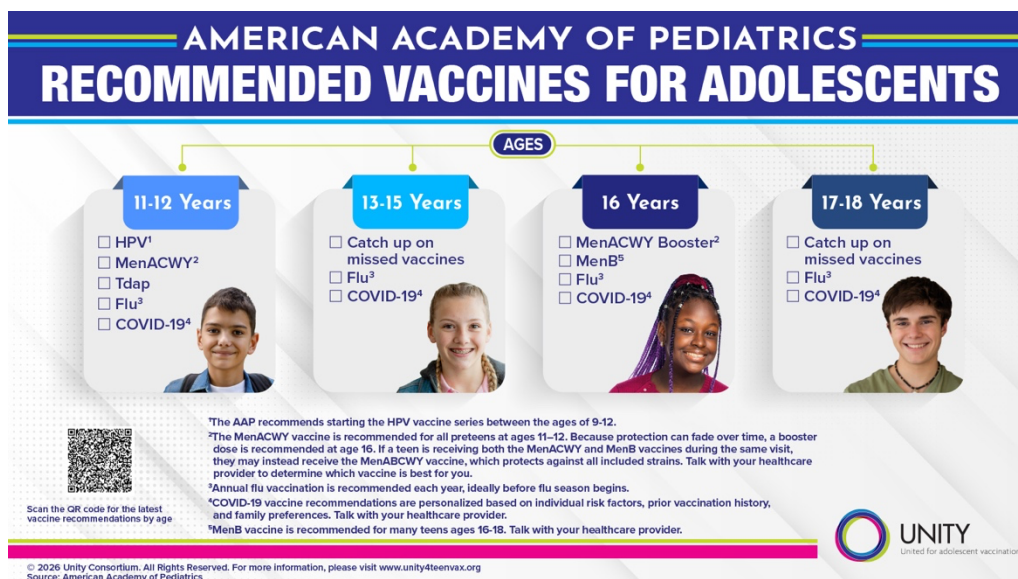
Sometimes! It depends on where you live. Some schools offer vaccines through clinics or special vaccination events. Check with your school or local health department to see what's available.

Where else can I get vaccines?

- Your doctor
- Community health center
- Local health department clinic
- Pharmacy

What vaccines do adolescents and young adults need?

Check out this graphic, based on the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) 2026 recommended adolescent immunization schedule [1]:



The AAP recommends starting the HPV vaccine series between the ages of 9-12.

Why get vaccinated during adolescent years?

- **Protection before exposure** – Vaccines help your immune system build strong defenses before you encounter serious diseases
- **Long-lasting immunity** – Many vaccines protect you for years or even life after a complete series



- **Community protection** – When more young people are vaccinated, it helps stop the spread of infections in schools, sports, and social activities

What if I'm behind on vaccines?

1. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to review your immunization record
2. They'll compare it with the current schedule and identify any missing doses
3. Work with them to create a catch-up plan—they'll tell you where to go and how many visits you'll need. Often you can get multiple vaccines at the same visit to save time

What side effects are common after vaccination, and when should I call a doctor?

Some people have mild side effects after vaccines, such as a sore arm, a low-grade fever, tiredness, or a headache, which go away in a day or two. Call your doctor or seek care right away if you have trouble breathing, swelling of the face or throat, a very high or persistent fever, worsening symptoms instead of improvement, or any reaction that worries you.

Do teens need parental permission if they're under 18?

Yes, teens under 18 usually need a parent or legal guardian to consent (by signing a form or giving verbal permission) before receiving recommended vaccines. Some states make exceptions, but the rules vary by state, so it's important to check the laws in your jurisdiction or talk with your healthcare provider.

Will I have to pay for vaccines?

Often, no or very little.

- Many adolescents aged 18 or younger qualify for free or low-cost vaccines through public programs (like the Vaccines for Children program) [2][3]
- If you have insurance, routine vaccines are usually covered with little or no copay
- Clinics may charge a small fee, but can often reduce or waive this if you can't afford it

Bottom line: Cost should not be a barrier. Ask your provider about cost and payment options.

Questions? Talk to your parent or guardian, doctor, nurse/school health office, pharmacist, or local health department. Healthcare providers are immunization experts and care about what you need. They can help you stay up to date on vaccines and find the best place to get them.

References

[1] American Academy of Pediatrics. (2026). Recommended child and adolescent immunization schedule for ages 18 years or younger. <https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/AAP-Immunization-Schedule.pdf>

[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, October 6). Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/vaccines-for-children/index.html>

[3] American Academy of Pediatrics. (2024, September 11). *Vaccines for Children Program: Free immunizations when cost is a barrier*. HealthyChildren.org. Retrieved March 6, 2026, from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/vaccines-for-children-program-free-immunizations-when-cost-is-a-barrier.aspx>

