

HPV vaccine is cancer prevention!

HPV -What You Need To Know

What is HPV ?

HPV is short for **h**uman **p**apillomav**v**irus, a common virus. Some types of this virus cause certain cancers and infections, like genital warts in males and females.

A person can have the virus and show no symptoms. If a person has the virus he/she can pass it on to someone else.

There is no cure for the virus. But there are vaccines that can prevent most of the infections and cancers that it causes.

Does HPV cause cancer?

The HPV virus can cause:

Some cancers in women:

- Cervical cancer
- Cancer of the vulva, vagina
- Cancer of the anus
- Cancers of the mouth and throat

Some cancers in men:

- Cancer of the penis
- Cancer of the anus
- Cancers of the mouth and throat

Cancer often takes years to grow after a person gets HPV. The types of HPV that can cause genital warts are not the same as the types of HPV that can cause some cancers. There is no way to know which people who have HPV will develop cancer or other health problems.

How is HPV spread?

You can get HPV by having skin-to-skin contact during sex with someone who has the virus. HPV can be passed even when an infected person has no signs or symptoms.

Does HPV cause health problems?

In most cases, HPV goes away on its own and does not cause any health problems. But when HPV does not go away, it can cause health problems like genital warts and cancer.



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As parents, you would do everything you can to protect your children's health.

Today, there is a vaccine to prevent some types of cancer in your kids: the HPV vaccine.



"I thankfully survived cervical cancer, but it was a difficult challenge. I heard about the HPV vaccine and had my daughter vaccinated so she would be spared from having to endure this in the future. I encourage all parents to please speak to your child's doctor about getting your daughter and son vaccinated against the Human Papillomavirus at ages 11 - 12. This will help to greatly reduce their risks of developing life changing diseases that I wish no young person would ever have to go through."

- Anje Corpus

HPV vaccine is most effective when given to all girls and boys at ages 11 to 12 years.



"As a Pediatrician, I strongly recommend the HPV vaccine for both girls and boys at ages 11 to 12 to protect them from cancers and diseases caused by HPV."

- Amanda del Rosario, MD

How can you help your children avoid HPV and the health problems it can cause?

Get your children vaccinated!

You can prevent HPV and the health problems it causes by vaccinating your children. Doctors and experts recommend the vaccine for girls and boys, ages 11 and 12 years before sexual activity begins and HPV infection can occur. Some doctors may recommend the HPV vaccine as early as 9 years old.

All **girls** and **boys** who are 11 to 12 years old should get the recommended series of HPV vaccine. Recent updates recommend **2 doses** instead of 3 doses for those **who begin the series before their 15th birthday**. CDC recommends 11 to 12 - year olds receive two doses of HPV vaccine 6 to 12 months apart.

If your daughter or son is older than 11 or 12 years old, and has not yet been vaccinated, it is not too late!

HPV vaccine is also recommended for:

- Girls ages 13 to 26 years old
- Boys ages 13 to 21 years old

Ask your child's doctor about the HPV vaccine.

Common Questions Parents Have About the HPV Vaccine

What HPV vaccine is there and what is the recommended number of doses?

There is an HPV Vaccine now available, Gardasil® 9 - valent.

This vaccine is given as a series of either two or three shots in a 6 month period depending on your child's age or health condition.

Why does my child need this HPV vaccine at such a young age?

Like all vaccines, HPV vaccines offer the best protection to girls and boys who complete the series and have time to develop an immune response. **The vaccine works best before infection with the virus.**

What if the doctor did not bring it up?

If your child's doctor has not said anything to you about the HPV vaccine, you should ask him/her.

Let your child's doctor know that you heard about the HPV vaccine. Ask if it is something your child should get.

Since HPV can be passed on during sexual activity, why does my child need the vaccine when he/she is not having sex yet?

Getting the vaccine early, at ages 11 or 12, before sexual activity begins, protects your child in the future. The vaccine can prevent 70% of cervical cancers and 90% of genital warts.

Is the HPV Vaccine safe?

YES. It is monitored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Are there any side effects?

The most common side effects are usually mild. Common side effects include:

- Pain, redness, or swelling in the arm where the shot was given
- Fever
- Headache or feeling tired
- Nausea
- Muscle or joint pain

How much does it cost?

Most health insurance plans cover the cost of the vaccine series.

If your preteen child(ren) does not have health insurance, programs like Vaccines for Children (VFC) can provide the vaccine for free or at low cost if your family is eligible. Contact the Department of Public Health and Social Services Immunization Program (735-7143) for information about their program and a list of clinics that participate in the VFC program.

To learn more about HPV Vaccine

Contact:

- Your child's doctor and/or clinic.
- The Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services Immunization Program
Phone: (671) 735-7143.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/vaccines

References

1. 'The HPV vaccine will protect your daughters and sons from some cancers' brochure, 'Imi Hale (www.imihale.org).
2. 'HPV Diseases and the Vaccines that Prevent Them' Fact Sheet, Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
3. Meites E, Kempe A, Markowitz LE. Use of a 2-Dose Schedule for Human Papillomavirus Vaccination — Updated Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2016;65:1405–1408. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6549a5>



"We vaccinated our son and daughter to protect them from cancers they might get from HPV virus. Just like we vaccinated them to protect them from polio, measles, meningitis, tetanus, whooping cough and other illnesses when they were younger. Their health comes first!"

- Sanchez Family