



HPV Vaccine for Preteens and Teens

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Why does my child need HPV vaccine?

This vaccine is for protection from most of the cancers caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. HPV is a very common virus that spreads between people when they have sexual contact with another person. About 14 million people, including teens, become infected with HPV each year. HPV infection can cause cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancers in women and penile cancer in men. HPV can also cause anal cancer, throat cancer, and genital warts in both men and women.

When should my child be vaccinated?

The HPV vaccine is recommended for preteen boys and girls at age 11 or 12 so they are protected before ever being exposed to the virus. HPV vaccine also produces a higher immune response in preteens than in older adolescents. If your teen hasn't gotten the vaccine yet, talk to their doctor about getting it for them as soon as possible.

HPV vaccination is a series of shots given over several months. The best way to remember to get your child all of the shots they need is to make an appointment for the remaining shots before you leave the doctor's office or clinic.

What else should I know about HPV vaccine?

Girls need HPV vaccination to prevent HPV infections that can cause cancers of the anus, cervix, vagina, vulva, and the mouth/throat area. Boys need HPV vaccination to prevent HPV infections that can cause cancers of the anus, penis, and the mouth/throat area. HPV vaccination can also prevent genital warts.

HPV vaccines have been studied very carefully. These studies showed no serious safety concerns. Common, mild adverse events (side effects) reported during these studies include pain in the arm where the shot was given, fever, dizziness and nausea.

Some preteens and teens might faint after getting the HPV vaccine or any shot. Preteens and teens should sit or lie down when they get a shot and stay like that for about 15 minutes after the shot. This can help prevent fainting and any injury that could happen while fainting.

Serious side effects from the HPV vaccine are rare. It is important to tell the doctor or nurse if your child has any severe allergies, including an allergy to latex or yeast. HPV vaccine is not recommended for anyone who is pregnant.

HPV vaccination is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine.

How can I get help paying for these vaccines?

The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides vaccines for children ages 18 years and younger, who are not insured, Medicaid-eligible, American Indian or Alaska Native. You can find out more about the VFC program by going online to www.cdc.gov and typing VFC in the search box.

Where can I learn more?

For more information about HPV vaccines and the other vaccines for preteens and teens, talk to your child's doctor or nurse. More information is also available on CDC's Vaccines for Preteens and Teens website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens.

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