What Kids Should Know About HPV and Cancer

What is HPV?
HPV (Human Papillomavirus) is a very common virus. You get it by kissing or touching another person's genitals (skin-to-skin genital contact). HPV can lead to genital warts and many types of cancer. There is a vaccine to prevent HPV.

Why do I need an HPV vaccine?
• Even if you are not sexually active right now, the vaccine will protect you in the future. Protection from the shots will last many, many years and likely your entire lifetime.
• HPV is so common that you will likely be exposed to it in your lifetime.
• You may not be able to tell if you or someone else has HPV.

When should I get vaccinated?
• It takes a series of 3 shots to be fully protected from HPV. You will need:
  – The first shot as early as age 9 (typically given at age 11 or 12).
  – The second shot about 1 to 2 months after the first shot.
  – The third shot about 6 months after the first shot.
• It is important to get all 3 shots before you become sexually active. (You may still get the series after becoming sexually active, but this is less ideal.)
• Call your doctor with questions. Your conversations will be confidential.

What will happen when I get the shot?
• You may have a sore arm.
• You may feel faint. Your doctor may have you wait 15 minutes before leaving.

For more information
For more information on HPV’s role in causing cancer or the HPV vaccine, please visit: http://www.cancer.org.