

# HPV and Cancer Prevention

## What Parents Should Know

### What is HPV?

HPV (Human Papillomavirus) is a common family of viruses that cause infection.

- Nearly everyone has an HPV infection sometime in their lives, often without knowing it.
- Different types of HPV infections affect different areas of the body.
- While most infections cause no problem, several HPV viruses cause cancer.
- HPV is the cause of almost all cervical cancer.

### HPV and the “anti-cancer” vaccine

- The HPV vaccine protects against the 9 most common cancer-causing HPV strains.
- Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent cancer caused by HPV.
- The HPV vaccine could prevent many HPV-related cancers each year:
  - 26,900 total cancers of the cervix, mouth, throat, anus, vulva, penis and vagina.
  - 10,400 cervical cancers and 4,000 deaths in women.
  - 7,200 mouth or throat cancer in men.

### HPV is a very common virus that can lead to:

- Cancers of the mouth and throat
- Cancers of other sex organs
- Genital warts
- Cancer of the cervix in women

*The HPV vaccine can prevent these!*

### Why receive the vaccine now?

It's best to get the vaccine before ever being exposed to HPV. This can prevent an HPV infection. The vaccine is best given at age 11 or 12, but it can be given to those 9 to 26 years old.

- It is possible to get HPV from skin-to-skin genital contact, such as touching someone's genitals. You can get it without having intercourse.
- Even if your son or daughter is not sexually active right now, the vaccine will provide long-lasting protection for the future.
- It takes a series of 3 shots to be fully protected from HPV.
- It may not be apparent if a partner has HPV, and condoms do not fully protect against it.
- The vaccine cannot treat or cure an infection once you have one.

## HPV vaccine safety

- More than 57 million doses have been given with no serious safety concerns identified.
- Your provider may ask you to wait an additional 15 minutes to watch for any potential side effects.
- As with any vaccine, side effects may include: headache, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, dizziness and fainting.

## Resources

For more information on HPV's role in causing cancer or the HPV vaccine, please visit these websites:

**American Cancer Society**

<http://www.cancer.org/>

**Centers for Disease Control**

<http://www.cdc.gov/STD/HPV/STDFact-HPV.htm>

**Minnesota Department of Health**

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/hpv/>

**WHY YOUR DOCTOR SAYS YOU SHOULD GET ALL 3 HPV\* VACCINE SHOTS**

\*Human Papillomavirus

HPV is a very common virus that can lead to:

- Cancers of the mouth and throat
- Cancer of other sex organs
- Genital warts
- Cancer of the cervix (women only)

**The HPV vaccine can prevent these!**