

Talking to parents about the HPV vaccine

Parents may be interested in vaccinating their children against the human papillomavirus (HPV), yet still have questions. Some might want additional information from you, the clinician they trust.

As a pediatrician or primary care physician, it's important you take the time to answer their questions. By addressing their concerns, you can help parents accept a recommendation for HPV vaccination to protect their children.



Start the conversation with your patients about the HPV vaccine today.

Why does my child need the HPV vaccine?

The HPV vaccine is important because it prevents cancer. That is why I recommend that your daughter/son be vaccinated today.

What diseases are caused by HPV?

Certain HPV types can cause cancer of the cervix, vagina and vulva in females, cancer of the penis in men, and in both females and males, cancers of the anus and the throat. We can help prevent infection with the HPV types that cause these cancers by starting the HPV vaccine series for your child today.

Is my child really at risk for HPV?

HPV is a very common and widespread virus that infects both females and males. We can help protect your child from the cancers and diseases caused by the virus by starting the HPV vaccination today.

Why do they need the HPV vaccine at such a young age?

The vaccine is FDA-approved to be given at age 9, and recommended for preteen boys and girls at age 11 or 12. The vaccination works best at these ages.

Is the HPV vaccine safe?

The HPV vaccine has been carefully studied for many years by medical and scientific experts. I believe the HPV vaccine is very safe. Vaccines, like any medication, can cause side effects. With the HPV vaccination this could include pain, swelling, and/or redness where the shot is given, or possibly headache.

Can the HPV vaccine cause infertility in my child?

There is no data available to suggest that getting the HPV vaccine will have an effect on future fertility. However, women who develop cervical cancer could require treatment that would limit their ability to have children.

Will my child perceive this as a green light to have sex?

Numerous research studies have shown that getting the HPV vaccine does not make kids more likely to be sexually active or start having sex at a younger age.

How do you know the vaccine works?

Ongoing studies show that the HPV vaccination works very well and has decreased HPV infection, genital warts and cervical precancers in young people in the years since it has been available.

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Why do boys need the HPV vaccine?

HPV infection can cause cancers of the penis, anus and throat in men and it can also cause genital warts. The HPV vaccine can help prevent the infection that leads to these diseases.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Would you give your child the HPV vaccine?

Yes, I have given the HPV vaccine to my child because I believe in the importance of this cancer-preventing vaccine. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, cancer centers and the CDC also agree that getting the HPV vaccine is important for your child.



Q&A

Making the choice to vaccinate against HPV

Terry Tsue, MD, FACS, Physician in Chief, The University of Kansas Cancer Center

1. What is HPV?

Human papillomavirus is a viral infection transferred by intimate skin-to-skin contact and is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States. Most sexually active adults will get HPV at some point in their lives, with 90% of cases clearing without medical intervention.

2. How does HPV cause cancer?

Because HPV is typically asymptomatic, HPV infection can persist and develop into harmful cancers. This includes cervical cancer and cancer of the genitals, anus, mouth and throat.

3. Isn't HPV primarily a disease that affects women?

HPV is not restricted to females. It impacts both men and women. About 20 million people in the United States are infected with HPV annually and infection rates are increasing by about 5% per year.

4. How does the HPV vaccine work?

There are 150 or more strains of HPV. HPV vaccination protects against the strains that most commonly cause anal, cervical, oral, penile, vaginal and vulvar cancers. The vaccine is FDA-approved to be given at age 9, and recommended for preteen boys and girls at age 11 or 12. At this age, children have a higher immune response to the vaccine than older teens. The University of Kansas Cancer Center recommends that male and female preteens receive vaccinations in their primary care physicians' offices as a standard healthcare protocol. The vaccine series offers lifetime protection and is a very effective means to prevent HPV infection.

Learn more about HPV vaccination.

Visit kucancercenter.org/hpv or call:

Physicians | 913-588-5862

Patients | 913-588-1227



kucancercenter.org