



HPV Vaccination

AUGUST 20, 2024

KEY POINTS

- Protect your child from certain cancers later in life with HPV vaccine.
- CDC recommends 2 doses of HPV vaccine at ages 11–12 years. HPV vaccination can be started at age 9 years.



Introduction

HPV vaccination provides safe, effective, and lasting protection against the HPV infections that most commonly cause cancer. The HPV vaccine series is most effective when given before a person is exposed to the virus.

Every year in the United States, HPV causes about 36,000 cases of cancer in both men and women.

KEEP READING:

[Reasons to Get Vaccinated](#)

Available vaccines

There are several types of HPV vaccines. That's why HPV vaccine is recommended earlier rather than later. It protects your child long before they ever have contact with the virus.

Gardasil-9

Gardasil-9 (9vHPV) is the vaccine distributed in the United States. This vaccine protects against nine HPV types (6, 11, 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52, and 58).

Other vaccine types

In the past, the quadrivalent HPV vaccine (Gardasil, 4vHPV) and bivalent HPV vaccine (Cervarix, 2vHPV) were licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

All of the HPV vaccines protect against HPV types 16 and 18 that cause most HPV cancers.

Recommendations

Children ages 11–12 years should get 2 doses of HPV vaccine, given 6 to 12 months apart. HPV vaccines can be given starting at age 9. Only 2 doses are needed if the first dose was given before 15th birthday.

1st dose

11–12 years old (can start at age 9)

2nd dose

6–12 months after the 1st dose

Children 9–14 years old who have received 2 doses of HPV vaccine less than 5 months apart will need a third dose.

People 15–26 years old who start the series later need 3 doses of HPV vaccine.

- The doses are given over 6 months.
- If your teen isn't vaccinated yet, talk to their doctor about doing so as soon as possible.

People with weakened immune systems should get 3 doses if they are 9–26 years old.

People older than 26 years. Vaccination is not recommended for everyone older than age 26 years.

- Some adults age 27 through 45 years who are not already vaccinated may decide to get HPV vaccine after speaking with their doctor about their risk for new HPV infections and the possible benefits of vaccination for them.
- HPV vaccination in this age range provides less benefit, because more people in this age range have already been exposed to HPV.

Why getting vaccinated is important

HPV is a very common virus that can cause [cancers](#) later in life. About 13 million people, including teens, become infected with HPV each year. You can protect your child from these cancers with HPV vaccine.

Who should get vaccinated

- HPV vaccination is recommended at ages 11–12 years. HPV vaccines can be given starting at age 9 years. All preteens need HPV vaccination, so they are protected from HPV infections that can cause cancer later in life.
- Teens and young adults through age 26 years who didn't start or finish the HPV vaccine series also need HPV vaccination.

Who shouldn't get vaccinated

Tell your doctor about any severe allergies. Some people should not get some HPV vaccines if they:

- Have ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to any ingredient of an HPV vaccine, or to a previous dose of HPV vaccine.
- Have an allergy to yeast (Gardasil and Gardasil 9).
- Are pregnant.

HPV vaccines are safe for children who are mildly ill. This includes those with a low-grade fever of less than 101 degrees, a cold, runny nose, or cough. People with a moderate or severe illness should wait until they are better.

The vaccine is safe and effective

HPV vaccination works extremely well. HPV vaccine has the potential to prevent more than 90% of cancers caused by HPV.

- Fewer teens and young adults are getting genital warts.
- HPV vaccination has also reduced the number of cases of pre-cancers of the cervix in young women.
- The protection provided by HPV vaccines lasts a long time. People who received HPV vaccines were followed for at least about 12 years, and their protection against HPV has remained high with no evidence of decreasing over time.

HPV infections and cervical pre-cancers (abnormal cells on the cervix that can lead to cancer) have dropped since 2006, when HPV vaccines were first used in the United States.

- Among teen girls, infections with HPV types that cause most HPV cancers and genital warts have **dropped 88%**.
- Among young adult women, infections with HPV types that cause most HPV cancers and genital warts have **dropped 81%**.
- Among vaccinated women, the percentage of cervical pre-cancers caused by the HPV types most often linked to cervical cancer has **dropped by 40%**.

Keep in mind



That's why HPV vaccine is recommended earlier rather than later. It protects your child long before they ever have contact with the virus.

Possible side effects

Many people who get HPV vaccine have no side effects at all. Some people report having very mild [side effects](#), like a sore arm from the shot.

The most common side effects of HPV vaccine are usually mild and include:

- Pain, redness, or swelling in the arm where the shot was given
- Fever
- Dizziness or fainting (fainting after any vaccine, including HPV vaccine, is more common among adolescents than others)
- Headache or feeling tired
- Nausea
- Muscle or joint pain

To prevent fainting and injuries from fainting, teens should be seated or lying down during vaccination; they should also do the same for 15 minutes after getting the shot.

Finding and paying for the vaccine

Your or your child's doctor's office is usually the best place to receive recommended vaccines. If your doctor does not stock HPV vaccine, ask for a referral. Vaccines may also be available at pharmacies, workplaces, community health clinics, health departments, or schools. You can contact your state health department to learn more about where to get HPV vaccine in your community.

KEEP READING:

[Where to Find Vaccines](#)

Vaccine costs

There are a few ways to cover the cost of vaccines:

Health insurance

Most health insurance plans cover the cost of vaccines. However, you may want to check with your insurance provider before going to a healthcare provider. Check for cost information and for a list of in-network vaccine providers.

Vaccines for Children Program

Your children may be able to get no-cost vaccines through the [Vaccines for Children \(VFC\) Program](#). This program helps families of eligible children who may not be able to afford or have access to vaccines.

SOURCES

CONTENT SOURCE:

National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases; Division of Viral Diseases