

# *A Parent's Guide to Preteen and Teen HPV Vaccination*

# Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

## Why Vaccinate Against HPV at 11-12 Years of Age?

- 1 The vaccine produces better immunity to fight infection when given at younger ages compared with older ages.<sup>4</sup>
- 2 Vaccination from HPV is much more effective at preventing disease and cancer if all three doses are administered far before someone has their first sexual contact.<sup>1,4</sup>
- 3 Most American men and women who become sexually active at some time will contract at least one type of HPV in their lifetime.<sup>6</sup>
- 4 HPV is easily spread by skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity. (Even if someone does not have sexual intercourse they could still get HPV).<sup>1,4,6</sup>
- 5 People who choose to have only one lifetime sex partner can still get HPV if their partner has had previous partners who were infected.<sup>6</sup>
- 6 Both vaccines have been tested in thousands of people around the world and have proved to have no serious side effects.<sup>4,5</sup>
- 7 Both vaccines are highly effective against HPV types that cause most cervical cancers; one of these protects against 90% of HPV associated genital warts.<sup>4,6</sup>



## What is HPV?

Human papillomavirus is a common family of viruses that causes infection on the skin or mucous membranes of various areas of the body.<sup>1</sup> There are over 100 different types of HPV. Different types of HPV infection affect different areas of the body.<sup>6</sup> For instance, some types of HPV cause warts in the genital area and other types can lead to abnormal cells on the cervix, vulva, anus, penis, mouth and throat, sometimes leading to cancer.<sup>1,2,4</sup>

## How Common is HPV?

HPV is incredibly common! According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), most sexually active American men and women will contract at least one type of HPV in their lifetime.<sup>4,6</sup> As a result, HPV is considered the most common sexually transmitted disease in the United States and is the main cause of almost all cervical cancers in women.<sup>3,6</sup>

## How Serious is HPV?

HPV is very serious! Approximately 79 million Americans are currently infected with HPV, and about 14 million more become newly infected each year.<sup>4,6</sup> There are around 12,000 new cervical cancer cases and 4,000 cervical cancer deaths each year in the U.S. Men are affected too. Around 7,000 HPV-associated cancer cases occur in American men each year.<sup>4,6</sup>

## How is HPV Spread?

The most common ways to get an HPV infection is from vaginal or anal sex with an infected person; however, this is NOT the only way to get HPV.<sup>1,6</sup> Infection can also be acquired from oral sex and any skin-to-skin contact with areas infected by HPV.<sup>1</sup> In a recent study, 46% of female participants contracted HPV before ever having vaginal sex.<sup>7</sup> It is possible to have HPV and not know it, so one could unknowingly spread HPV to another person.<sup>4,6</sup>



**“Most people who become infected with HPV do not even know it.”**

**For More Information...**

Contact your health care provider or county health department

Michigan Department of Community Health  
[www.michigan.gov/immunize](http://www.michigan.gov/immunize)

Michigan Department of Community Health  
[www.michigan.gov/teenvaccines](http://www.michigan.gov/teenvaccines)

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)  
[www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)

Vaccine Education Center  
[www.chop.edu/vaccine](http://www.chop.edu/vaccine)

Vaccines for Children Program  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/index.html>

**References:**

1. ACOG Committee on Adolescent Health Care. Fact Sheet: Human Papillomavirus. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. <http://www.acog.org>. Published 2010. Accessed March 12, 2013.

2. National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. Preteens and Teens Need Vaccines Tool Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/PreteenVaccines/>. Updated August 6, 2012. Accessed March 12, 2013.

3. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. HPV and Cancer. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/cancer.html>. Updated March 21, 2012. Accessed March 12, 2013.

4. National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. HPV Vaccine-Questions and Answers. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/vac-faqs.htm>. Updated July 20, 2012. Accessed March 12, 2013.

5. National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases. Vaccine Safety: Human Papillomavirus Vaccine. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Vaccines/HPV/index.html>. Updated January 24, 2013. Accessed March 12, 2013.

6. National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention. Genital HPV Infection- Fact Sheet. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/HPV/STDFact-HPV.htm>. Updated February 14, 2013. Accessed March 12, 2013.

7. Shew, ML, et al. High frequency of human papillomavirus detection in the vagina before first vaginal intercourse among females enrolled in a longitudinal cohort study. *J Infect Dis*. 2013 Mar 15;207(6):1012-5.

8. Virtual Immunization Communication Network. HPV Vaccine is Cancer Prevention. Available at: <http://www.vicnetwork.org/>. Accessed January 28, 2014.

# Can HPV Infection Be Treated?

There is no treatment for HPV infection.<sup>3, 6</sup> There are only treatments available for the health problems HPV can cause such as genital warts, cervical changes and cervical cancer. In some cases, the body fights off the virus naturally. In the cases where the virus cannot be fought off naturally, the body is at risk for serious complications such as cancer.<sup>3, 6</sup>

## What is the HPV Vaccine?

There are two HPV vaccines licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and recommended by the CDC. Two vaccines (Cervarix® and Gardasil®) protect against cervical cancers in women.<sup>4</sup> One vaccine (Gardasil®) also protects against genital warts and cancers of the anus, vagina and vulva. Both vaccines are available for females. Only Gardasil® is available for males.<sup>4, 6</sup> HPV vaccines are given in three shots over six months; it is important to get all three doses to get the best protection.<sup>2, 6</sup>

## When Should My Child Get The HPV Vaccine?

Routine vaccination with three doses of HPV vaccine is recommended for all 11 and 12 year old boys and girls.<sup>2, 4, 5</sup> The vaccines can be given as early as 9 years of age. Catch-up ages for girls are from 13-26 years and 13-21 years for boys. If your son or daughter did not receive the vaccine at the recommended ages, they may still be eligible for doses.<sup>4, 5, 6</sup>

For the HPV vaccine to work best, it is very important for preteens to get all three doses well before any sexual activity begins.<sup>4, 6</sup> It is possible to get infected with HPV the very first time they have sexual contact with another person, even if they do not have intercourse. Also, the vaccine produces better immunity to fight infection when given at the younger ages compared to the older ages.<sup>4, 6</sup>

## Are the Vaccines Safe and Effective?

The vaccines have been shown to be highly effective in protecting against the HPV types that cause cancers, with few to no side effects.<sup>4, 6</sup> **In fact, A recent study published in The Journal of Infectious Diseases showed that, since the vaccine was introduced in 2006, cases of HPV decreased 56 percent among female teenagers 14-19 years of age who had received the vaccine.**

All vaccines used in the U.S. are required to go through years of extensive safety testing before they are licensed by the FDA.<sup>5</sup> Both HPV vaccines had extensive clinical trials before licensure where more than 28,000 males and females participated. Now in use, the vaccines are continually monitored for their safety and effectiveness through three monitoring systems. These systems can monitor adverse events already known to be caused by a vaccine as well as detect rare events.<sup>5</sup>

Approximately 62 million doses of HPV vaccine have been distributed in the U.S since 2006.<sup>8</sup> Since its recommendation for routine use in the U.S. in 2007, no serious safety concerns have been identified. Common, mild side effects included pain where the shot was given, fever, headache, and nausea.<sup>4</sup>

**Talk to your healthcare provider today about protecting your child against HPV infection!**

