

HPV Vaccine

Questions and Answers for Parents



The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend HPV vaccination for 11-12 year-old girls and boys.

What is human papillomavirus (HPV)?



Human papillomavirus (pap-ah-LO-mah-VYE-rus) (HPV) is a common virus that is passed from person to person through oral sex, anal sex or penile-vaginal sex. There are about 40 HPV types that can infect the genital areas of males and females.

How common is HPV?

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States. At least half of sexually active people will get HPV at some time in their lives. About 6 million Americans get infected each year. HPV is most common in people who are in their late teens and early 20's. Most people who have HPV show no signs or symptoms.

How common are HPV related cancers?

HPV infection with one of the "high risk" types of the virus is associated with several types of cancer. Each year in the U.S., about 18,000 HPV associated cancers affect women, with cervical cancer being the most common type. About 7,000 HPV associated cancers affect men each year.

What is the HPV vaccine?

There are two HPV vaccines approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Both vaccines (Cervarix[®] and Gardasil[®]) protect against most cervical cancers in females. One vaccine (Gardasil[®]) is also approved to prevent the types of HPV that cause the most genital warts and anal cancers in both males and females.

How is the HPV vaccine given?

HPV vaccines are given in three doses over 6 months.

- 1st dose: Now—or at a date you and your child's healthcare provider choose
- 2nd dose: 1-2 months after 1st dose
- 3rd dose: 6 months after 1st dose

HPV vaccines can be given at the same time as other vaccines.

Who should get the HPV vaccine?

Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) recommend routine HPV vaccination for all 11-12 year old girls and boys. The vaccine is also recommended for 13-26 year old girls/women and 13-21 year-old boys and men who have not yet received or completed the full series of shots. The vaccine should also be considered for men 22-26 years of age.

Is there anyone who should not get the HPV vaccine?

People who have had a severe allergic reaction to any component of the HPV vaccine, or to an earlier dose of HPV vaccine should not get the HPV vaccine. People who are moderately or severely ill should wait until they recover before getting the vaccine. Pregnant girls/women should not get the vaccine. If a girl/woman finds out that she is pregnant after she has started the vaccine series, she should wait until she completes her pregnancy before finishing the vaccine series.

Why is the HPV vaccine recommended for such young girls and boys?

The vaccine is most effective for those who get vaccinated before their first sexual contact. It does not work as well for those who have been exposed to the virus before getting the vaccine. Therefore, it is important to vaccinate girls and boys while they are young so they get the full benefits of the vaccine.



How effective are the HPV vaccines?

Both vaccines are effective in preventing the types of HPV that cause up to 70% of cervical cancers. Gardasil[®] is also approved to protect against the types of HPV that cause about 90% of genital warts and most anal cancers. Vaccines will not treat existing HPV infections or complications.

Is the HPV vaccine safe?



The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has licensed both Gardasil® and Cervarix® as safe and effective. Studies have shown no serious side effects. The most common side effects were soreness at the injection site, headache and nausea.

Will my child be required to get vaccinated before attending school?

While HPV vaccination is not required, the NJDHSS strongly supports the CDC recommendation that all girls and boys 11-12 years of age be vaccinated for HPV.

What is the cost of the HPV vaccine?

Cost of the HPV vaccine can vary. Most insurance plans and managed care plans cover the cost of recommended vaccines. Check with your insurance provider to be certain that the HPV vaccine is covered.

How can my family get the vaccine if we don't have insurance and cannot pay for it?

NJ Vaccines for Children (VFC) is a federally funded, state-operated vaccine supply program that provides pediatric vaccines at no cost to doctors who serve children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay. There are over 1,200 medical providers enrolled in the New Jersey VFC program. For more information, contact the NJDHSS Vaccines for Children Program at (609) 826-4862 or vfc@doh.state.nj.us.

Where can I get more information?

- New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services website: www.nj.gov/health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: www.cdc.gov/hpv
- CDC HPV Vaccination Information Page: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/
- Childhood immunization schedule: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/child-schedule.htm
- CDC-INFO Contact Center at:
English and Spanish
(800) CDC-INFO
(800) 232-4636
TTY: (888) 232-6348



For more information about the HPV Vaccine or other vaccines for children, contact the New Jersey Vaccines for Children Program:

(609) 826-4862

