

Guiding Conversations

Addressing Parents' Top Questions about HPV Vaccination

Recommend the HPV vaccine series the same way other adolescent vaccines are recommended. For example, say “Your child needs these shots today,” and name all of the vaccines recommended for the child’s age.

Some parents might need additional information from their trusted healthcare provider. Taking the time to answer questions and addressing their concerns can help parents feel more comfortable about vaccinating against HPV.



Why does my child need the HPV vaccine?

HPV vaccine prevents cancer, that is why it is important. This is why I recommend your child be vaccinated today. Starting the vaccination series today is the best way to protect your child from certain types of cancer.



What cancers are caused by HPV?

Certain HPV types can cause cancer of the cervix, vagina, vulva, penis, anus and the throat. We can help prevent infection by starting the HPV vaccine series for your child today.



Is my child really at risk for HPV?

The Human papillomavirus, or HPV, is a common cancer-causing virus which affects both males and females. This vaccine works best when given at ages 11-12 and can be given as early as 9 years of age. Starting the vaccine series is the best way to protect your child long term.



I read some things online about vaccines, I don't know if it's safe.

The HPV vaccine is very safe and effective, which is confirmed by leading health experts. There's a lot of confusing misinformation online about vaccines. Like any medication, there may be mild side effects such as pain, swelling at the injection site, low-grade fever, or redness where the vaccine was given or a headache.



How do you know if the vaccine works?

Ongoing studies show HPV vaccination works very well and has decreased HPV infection, genital warts and cervical precancers in young people. Vaccines protect your child before they are exposed to an infection. Giving the vaccine at the recommended ages protects them long before they are ever exposed to HPV.



I'm worried my child will think getting the HPV vaccine is a green light to have sex.

This is a common concern, numerous research studies have shown getting HPV vaccine does not make kids more likely to be sexually active or start having sex at a younger age.



Could the HPV vaccine cause my child to have problems with infertility?

HPV vaccine does not cause fertility problems, which is supported by current data. It's important to note that treatment for cervical cancer may limit someone's ability to become pregnant.



Why do boys need HPV vaccine?

Both males and females can become infected with genital warts and cancers of the anus and throat, while boys specifically are at risk developing cancers of the penis. Getting vaccinated against HPV infection is the best protection.



Would you get the HPV vaccine for your kids?

Yes, I have given HPV vaccine to my child (or grandchild, etc.). 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 all agree getting the HPV vaccine is the best way to prevent HPV related cancers.