

HPV Vaccine Fact vs. Fiction

The American Cancer Society recommends the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to prevent cervical cancer and precancers. The vaccine is used to prevent cancer that can result from an HPV infection. In addition to cancer of the cervix, HPV is also linked to cancer of the anus, penis, throat and tongue. The vaccine requires two injections, six to 12 months apart, for boys and girls age 11-12, and also for adolescents age 13-14. Those who begin the vaccine between the ages of 15-26 will need to receive three doses of the HPV vaccine.

Read the following facts to learn more about the HPV vaccine.

Fact 1: The vaccine is safe.

Years of studying people who have had the HPV vaccine show that it is safe. The HPV vaccine may cause temporary dizziness or nausea when it is injected, but it rarely causes harmful side effects. More than 80 million doses of the HPV vaccine have been given in the United States with no serious problems.



Fact 2: The HPV vaccine causes no bad side effects.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have found no proof that the HPV vaccine causes harmful side effects. Like other vaccines, there may be temporary side effects like pain, redness and/or swelling where the shot was given. In rare cases, a person may have an allergic reaction to certain vaccines if they're allergic to yeast or latex.

Fact 3: The HPV vaccine does not cause fertility problems.

Research has not shown the HPV vaccine causes fertility problems. The vaccine can help protect women from future fertility problems linked to cervical cancer. The HPV vaccine is a safe way to help protect health and the ability to have healthy babies.

Fact 4: The HPV vaccine does not contain harmful ingredients.

Parents worry about the HPV vaccine ingredients, one being aluminum. The HPV vaccine contains aluminum, but in a safe amount. Aluminum-containing vaccines have been used for years and in more than 1 billion people. Aluminum is in the food we eat, water and even breast milk. Every day, infants, children and adults come into contact with more aluminum than that contained in the vaccine.

Fact 5: The HPV vaccine is for both males and females.

Both males and females can become infected with HPV. About 8 or 9 out of 10 sexually active adults will contract at least one type of HPV in their lifetime. Cervical cancer is caused by HPV, but cancers of the anus, penis, throat and tongue are also linked to HPV infection.

The HPV vaccine is strongly recommended for boys and girls to help protect against HPV-linked cancers and genital warts. The HPV vaccine helps reduce the spread of HPV in both males and females.

Fact 6: Getting the HPV vaccine does not open the door to having sex.

Getting the HPV vaccine does not lead to changes in sexual behavior. The age when teens start having sex, the risk of sexually transmitted diseases and number of pregnancies are similar when comparing teens who have been vaccinated to those who have not.

The vaccine is most beneficial when given before your son or daughter comes in contact with the virus. Young teens build more antibodies against the HPV vaccine (see Fact 8) and are less likely to already have HPV. Vaccinating your child against HPV helps protect them.

Fact 7: The HPV vaccine works and can help prevent cervical cancer.

The HPV vaccine protects against almost all cervical HPV infections and precancers. Studies show the HPV vaccine can prevent infections and precancers caused by HPV. Women in the United States, along with women in other countries, who receive the HPV vaccine have fewer cervical changes and cases of genital warts.

Fact 8: The HPV vaccine lasts a long time – maybe forever.

If your child gets the HPV vaccine, he or she will make proteins, called antibodies, that fight the virus. Antibodies give strong and long-lasting protection. While there's no indication that this protection will lessen over time, observational studies are underway. Current studies suggest the HPV vaccine protection lasts a long time.

Source: American Cancer Society

Fast Facts

Vaccinate your children today to prevent them from contracting HPV-related cancers later. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends boys and girls age 11-12 receive the two-dose HPV vaccine six to 12 months apart. The vaccine protects preteens before they are exposed to the virus. The FDA-approved vaccine may be given to children as young as 9. See your healthcare provider for more information.

Kansas and Missouri are among states with the lowest vaccination rates in the nation

- 50.9% of girls and 36% of boys in Kansas
- 59.3% of girls and 44.7% of boys in Missouri



62.8% of girls vaccinated nationwide



10% of the population has oral HPV, which can cause cancers of the throat, tonsils and tongue



33,000+ HPV-associated cancers occur in the U.S. each year



80% of people get HPV infections at some point in their lives

For more information

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kucancercenter.org/hpv

