

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Cancer Prevention through Vaccination

Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection is a common infection in both boys and girls. About 80% of people will be infected with HPV by age 45, with 74% of infections occurring by age 24. Most HPV infections resolve on their own, however HPV is known to cause multiple types of cancers including: cervical, vulvar, vaginal, penile, anal, mouth and throat. Almost 43,000 HPV related cancers occur in the U.S. each year: over 24,000 in women and over 18,000 in men.

HPV is typically passed from one person to another through sexual contact including vaginal, oral and anal sex. It can also be passed through skin to skin contact.

There are low-risk HPV types that can cause warts around the genitals and anus in both men and women. The high-risk types cause the cancers previously mentioned.

The vaccine is 97% to 100% effective in preventing cervical, vulvar and vaginal cancers and 75% effective in preventing anal cancer. It prevents genital warts in 89% of males and 99% of females. Studies suggest that HPV vaccine offers long-lasting protection against HPV infection.

HPV Vaccine Facts:

- **It is safe** - More than 270 million doses have been given worldwide since 2006 with continuous studies showing it to be very safe.
- **HPV vaccine is for boys and girls** - The HPV vaccine is recommended at age 9-12. The vaccine has been found to be more effective when started at an early age. For children starting the vaccine under age 15, a series of two shots are given 6-12 months apart. Those starting at age 15 or above need a 3 dose series. Giving the vaccine at a younger age assures that children have protection against HPV infection before they become sexually active and exposed to the virus.
- **HPV vaccine does NOT contain harmful ingredients** - People are often worried about vaccine ingredients. The HPV vaccine does contain a small amount of aluminum. People are exposed to aluminum every day through food and cooking utensils. Aluminum containing vaccines have been used for decades and have been given to more than 1 billion people without problems.
- **HPV vaccine does NOT cause fertility problems** - Many studies have shown that HPV vaccine does not have a negative effect on future fertility. In fact, the HPV vaccine can actually help protect fertility by preventing gynecological problems related to the treatment of cervical cancer.

HPV vaccine prevents cancers! It is safe and effective! Protect your children!

American Cancer Society, Merck, CDC, Hunterdon/Mercer Chronic Disease Coalition and Reuters websites referenced - 5/19, 12/22