

FAQs for Parents and Guardians

About Starting the HPV Vaccine Series at 9

Adapted From Answering parents' questions about HPV vaccination, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.¹ In the public domain.

Why does my child need the HPV vaccine at such a young age?

Vaccines protect your child before they get sick. That's why we give the HPV vaccine when they are young, to keep them safe long before they might be exposed to the virus.

Children respond more strongly to the HPV vaccine when they are younger. This may give them better protection against some cancers.

Why does my child need the HPV Vaccine?

The HPV vaccine is important because it stops infections that can cause cancer later in your child's life. That's why we should start the vaccine series today.

What diseases are caused by HPV?

Some HPV infections can cause cancer, like cancer of the cervix, throat, penis, or anus. But we can protect your child from these cancers in the future by getting the first HPV shot today.

Is the HPV vaccine safe?

Yes, the HPV vaccine is very safe. It is one of the most studied medications on the market. Like any medicine, vaccines can cause side effects, such as pain, swelling, or redness where the shot is given. That's normal for the HPV vaccine too and should go away in a day or two. Sometimes children faint after they get shots, but we'll make sure your child stays seated after the shot to keep them safe.

How do you know the vaccine works?

Studies show that the HPV vaccine works really well. It has reduced the number of infections and HPV pre-cancers in young people since it became available. Over 30,000 Americans get cancer from HPV every year. Most could be prevented with the HPV vaccine.

Is my child really at risk for HPV?

HPV is a very common infection that can cause cancer in both women and men. Starting the vaccine series today will help protect your child from the cancers and diseases caused by HPV.

Updated Recommendation

All children should be vaccinated against HPV beginning at age 9 years to increase vaccination effectiveness and prevent more cancers. This recommendation is endorsed by leading experts in children's health, cancer prevention, and governing bodies like the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Cancer Society, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Facts About HPV and HPV Vaccination

- HPV is linked with 91% of cervical and anal cancers, 63% of penile cancers, and 70% of oropharynx cancers.²
- Research has shown that the vaccine provides close to 100% protection against infections and pre-cancers caused by the high-risk HPV types that the vaccine protects against.³
- In 2021, only 33.8% of 13-year-old-adolescents in NYS (excluding NYC) have completed the HPV vaccine series.⁴

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Answering parents' questions about HPV vaccination. <https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/hcp/answering-questions.html>. Published November 2021. Accessed June 30, 2023.

2. National HPV Vaccination Roundtable. HPV vaccination at 9-12 years old. <https://hpvroundtable.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Evidence-Summary-HPV-Vaccination-Age-9-12-Final.pdf>. Published April 2022. Accessed June 30, 2023.

3. American Cancer Society. HPV VACs: Just the facts for providers. <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/online-documents/en/pdf/flyers/hpv-vacs-just-the-facts-for-providers.pdf>. Published May 2020. Accessed June 30, 2023.

4. New York State Department of Health. Prevention agenda dashboard. https://webbi1.health.ny.gov/SASStoredProcess/guest?_program=EBI/PHIG/apps/dashboard/pa_dashboard&p=it&ind_id=pa41_0. Revised January 2023. Accessed June 30, 2023.