

HPV

HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS

WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW

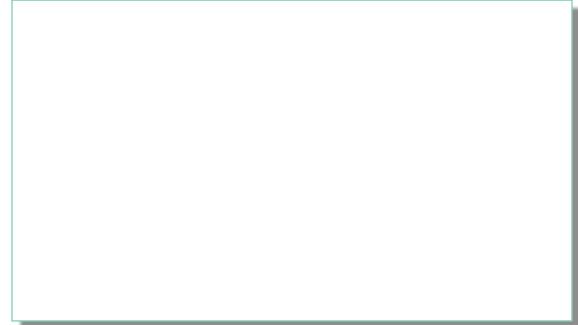
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For more information about HPV, please visit the TEAM UP Tennessee HPV toolkit website:

<http://teamup.tennessee.edu/hpv>.

This publication is brought to you by TEAM UP Tennessee, a statewide partnership of organizations teaming up to promote cancer education and screening.



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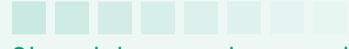
Photography courtesy of iStockphoto.com

How much does the vaccine cost?



The vaccine is given in three shots that cost about \$130 per shot. Most health insurance policies will cover these vaccines. Check with your insurance provider to determine coverage. If your health insurance does not cover the vaccine or you have no health insurance, your child may qualify for the Vaccines for Children Program (see www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc).

Get all three shots!



Should you choose to have your child vaccinated, it is important to follow the recommended three-shot regimen. The following website allows you to set up e-mail or regular mail reminders to help you remember the second and third shots: www.gardasil.com/what-is-gardasil/3-is-key/three-is-key.

Will vaccination encourage my child to have sex?

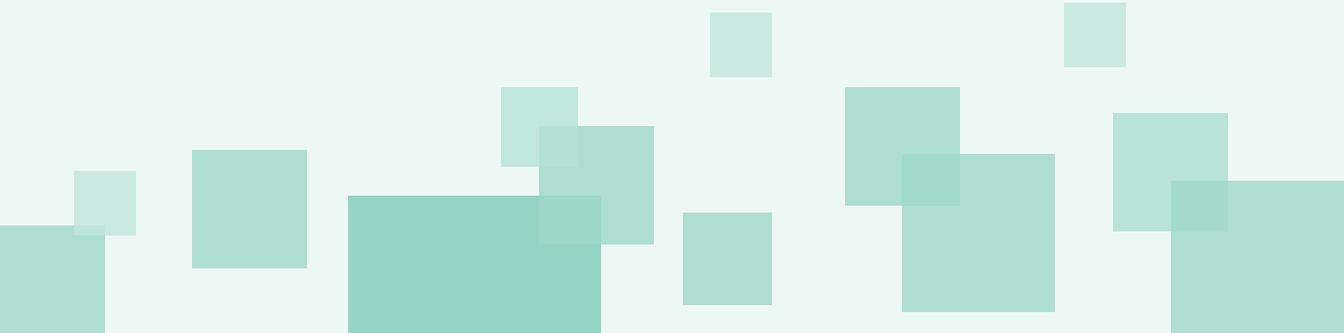


No. If you choose to vaccinate your child as an adolescent, the HPV vaccine can be given at the same time as other vaccines and does not require an explanation. Getting your child vaccinated against HPV does not mean you have to discuss topics with your child before you or your child is ready. Nor does it mean that you don't trust your child or assume that he or she will be sexually active at an early age. The vaccine is a preventative health tool to help reduce the chances of your child developing HPV-related health issues both now and later in life.

Is the vaccine safe?



Yes. Research has shown that this vaccine is safe and effective. If side effects occur, they are usually mild and may include pain, redness or swelling at the injection site.





As a parent, you play a very important role in the health of your children. While they are in your care, they are vulnerable to the health choices that you make — good and bad. Educating yourself about medical breakthroughs like the HPV vaccine is one way to protect your child from cancer and other diseases.

What is HPV?



HPV stands for human papillomavirus. HPV is a very common virus transmitted by sexual contact and affects both males and females.

How does a person get HPV?



Genital HPV is spread very easily from skin-to-skin contact. HPV can also be spread via oral sex.

Are there different types of HPV?



Yes. In total, there are more than 100 types of HPV. About 40 types of HPV affect the genital tract and are sexually transmitted. Some of these types are **high-risk** and others are considered **low-risk**.

Why should I be concerned about HPV?



Low-risk types of HPV can cause genital warts in males and females. **High-risk** types of HPV can lead to several different cancers. The most common cancer related to HPV is cervical cancer in females. HPV can also lead to cancer of the vagina, vulva and anus. In males, HPV can

lead to penile and anal cancer. Recent findings have linked HPV to head and neck cancers in both sexes and also to certain types of lung cancer.

Is my child at risk for HPV?



It is only natural to think that sex is something that happens to other people's kids. Unfortunately, even though parents have the best intentions, research shows that about half of teenagers are sexually active by the time they reach age 19. This number goes up to 90 percent by age 24 in both sexes. One recent study found that 1 in 4 girls aged 14-19 had a sexually transmitted infection, and HPV was the most common infection found.

It is important to keep in mind that even if your child waits to engage in sexual activity until marriage/adulthood, there is no guarantee that his or her partner has not been exposed to HPV. HPV is not confined by sex, race, age or social status. Anyone who has or ever will have sex is at risk for HPV. Current estimates suggest that more than 50 percent of sexually active men and women will have HPV at some point in their life.

How can I help to protect my child?



1. There are two vaccines available that help to prevent HPV:

- **Gardasil** provides protection against four strains of HPV that cause 70 percent of cervical cancer and 90 percent of genital warts. Gardasil is approved for use in males and females aged 9-26.
- **Cervarix** provides protection against two strains of HPV that cause 70 percent of cervical cancer. Cervarix is approved for use in females aged 10-25. Cervarix is not yet approved for use in boys.
- Vaccinating your child before he or she is sexually active is the best defense against HPV exposure.

2. Another important prevention tool is learning how to communicate with your child. Research suggests that the teens who feel they can discuss sexual issues with their parents are more likely to delay sexual activity. Sex education begins at home.

3. You can also teach your children these facts about avoiding HPV:
- **Sexual abstinence** is the only sure way to avoid exposure to HPV.
 - **Condoms** are able to prevent about 70 percent of the risk of infection. However, it is still possible to transmit HPV because not all areas are fully covered by a condom.