



HPV Vaccination: What Everyone Should Know

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/hpv/public/index.html>

How Common Are HPV Infections?

HPV infections are so common that nearly all men and women will get HPV at some point in their lives. Nearly 80 million Americans are currently infected with HPV. About 14 million Americans, including teens, become infected each year.

HPV is spread through intimate skin-to-skin contact. You can get HPV by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has the virus.

What Kinds of Problems Does HPV Infection Cause?

Most HPV infections (9 out of 10) go away by themselves within 2 years. But sometimes, HPV infections will last longer and can cause certain types of cancers. HPV infections can cause cancers of the:

- cervix, vagina, and vulva in women;
- penis in men; and
- anus and back of the throat, including the base of the tongue and tonsils (oropharynx), in both women and men.

Every year in the United States, HPV is estimated to cause nearly 36,000 cases of cancer in men and women.

Who Should Get HPV Vaccine?

HPV vaccination is recommended for all preteens (including girls and boys) at age 11–12 years. All preteens need HPV vaccination, so they are protected from HPV infections that can cause cancer later in life.

- Teens and young adults through age 26 years who didn't start or finish the HPV vaccine series also need HPV vaccination.

CDC recommends that 11- to 12-year-olds receive two doses of HPV vaccine 6 to 12 months apart.

- The first dose is routinely recommended at age 11–12 years old; the series can be started at age 9 years.
- Only two doses are recommended if vaccination started at age 9 and through age 14.

Teens and young adults who start the series later, at ages 15 through 26 years, need three doses of HPV vaccine.

- Adolescents aged 9 through 14 years who have already received two doses of HPV vaccine less than 5 months apart will require a third dose.
- Three doses are recommended for people with weakened immune systems aged 9 through 26 years.

Vaccination is not recommended for everyone older than age 26 years. However, some adults age 27 through 45 years who are not already vaccinated may decide to get HPV vaccine after speaking with their doctor about their risk for new HPV infections and the possible benefits of vaccination. HPV vaccination in this age range provides less benefit, as more people have already been exposed to HPV.

Who Should Not Get HPV Vaccine?

Tell your doctor about any severe allergies. Some people should not get some HPV vaccines, including:

- People who have ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to any ingredient of an HPV vaccine, or to a previous dose of HPV vaccine.
- People who have an allergy to yeast (Gardasil and Gardasil 9).
- People who are pregnant.

HPV vaccines are safe for children who are mildly ill – for example, with a low-grade fever of less than 101 degrees, a cold, runny nose, or cough. People with a moderate or severe illness should wait until they are better.

What Types of HPV Vaccines Are There?

Three HPV vaccines—9-valent HPV vaccine (Gardasil® 9, 9vHPV), quadrivalent HPV vaccine (Gardasil®, 4vHPV), and bivalent HPV vaccine (Cervarix®, 2vHPV)—have been licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). All three HPV vaccines protect against HPV types 16 and 18 that cause most HPV cancers.

Gardasil-9 (Merck), a nine-valent HPV vaccine (9vHPV) that protects against HPV types 6, 11, 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52, and 58, is the only HPV vaccine currently distributed in the U.S.

How Well Do These Vaccines Work?

HPV vaccination works extremely well. HPV vaccine has the potential to prevent more than 90% of HPV-attributable cancers.

- Since HPV vaccination was first recommended in 2006, there has been a significant reduction in HPV infections.
- Fewer teens and young adults are getting genital warts.
- HPV vaccine has also reduced the number of cases of precancers of the cervix in young women.

With more than 12 years of data, we know that HPV vaccine offers long-lasting protection against HPV infection and HPV disease.

- HPV vaccination does not lose the ability to protect against new HPV infections over time.

What Are Possible Side Effects?

Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. Many people who get HPV vaccine have no side effects at all. Some people report having very mild side effects, like a sore arm from the shot.

The most common side effects of HPV vaccine are usually mild and include:

- Pain, redness, or swelling in the arm where the shot was given
- Fever
- Headache or feeling tired
- Nausea
- Muscle or joint pain

Brief fainting spells and related symptoms (such as jerking movements) can happen after any medical procedure, including vaccination. Sitting or lying down when getting a shot and staying in that position for about 15 minutes after a vaccination can help prevent fainting and injuries caused by falls.

On very rare occasions, severe (anaphylactic) allergic reactions may occur after vaccination. People with severe allergies to any component of a vaccine should not receive that vaccine.

Where Can I Find These Vaccines?

HPV vaccine may be available at private doctor offices, community health clinics, school-based health centers, and health departments.

If your doctor does not stock HPV vaccine, ask for a referral. If you don't have a regular source of health care, federally funded health centers can provide services. Locate one near you at <https://www.vaccines.gov/get-vaccinated/where>. You can also contact your state health department to learn more about where to get HPV vaccine in your community.

How Do I Pay for These Vaccines?

The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program helps families of eligible children who might not otherwise have access to vaccines. The program provides vaccines at no cost to children ages 18 years and younger who are uninsured, Medicaid-eligible, or American Indian/Alaska Native. To learn more about the VFC program, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/parents/qa-detailed.html>.