

Is the HPV vaccine safe?

YES. Studies show that the vaccine is extremely safe. This vaccine has been studied in thousands of men and women in the United States and around the world. More than 86 million doses of HPV vaccine have been distributed in the United States, and there have been no serious safety concerns. Occasional, mild side effects include pain at the injection site, headache, fever, nausea and fainting. HPV, and all vaccines, are continually monitored for safety.

How is the vaccine given?

Depending on your age and if you are immunocompromised, you may need two or three doses of HPV vaccine.



- ◆ If you are healthy and the HPV vaccine series was started prior to the 15th birthday, then two doses of HPV vaccine are needed, with the second dose 6 to 12 months after the first.
- ◆ If the HPV vaccine series was started at age 15 or older, then three doses of HPV vaccine are needed. The second dose of HPV vaccine should be administered one to two months after the first, and the third dose should be administered six months after the first.
- ◆ Regardless of your age, if you are immunocompromised, you need three doses of HPV vaccine at 0, 1-2, and 6 months.

HPV vaccine can be given at the same time as other vaccines.

How can I get the vaccine if I don't have insurance and cannot afford it?

If you are insured, your insurance should cover the costs. If you are 18 or younger and you meet one of the following qualifications, you are eligible to receive the vaccine at no cost through the federally-funded, state-operated Vaccines For Children (VFC) program. You qualify if you:

- ◆ are eligible for Medicaid.
- ◆ have no health insurance (uninsured).
- ◆ are American Indian or Alaskan Native.
- ◆ have health insurance, but it does not cover the cost of the vaccine (underinsured).

The North Dakota Department of Health also provides HPV vaccine for uninsured and underinsured adults ages 19 and older.

Where can I get more information?

- ◆ Talk to your health care provider or local public health unit
- ◆ NDDoH website and HPV information
www.ndhealth.gov/immunize
- ◆ CDC HPV information
www.cdc.gov/hpv



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

HPV

Human Papillomavirus



**Questions and Answers about
Risk and Prevention**

What is Human Papillomavirus (HPV)?

HPV is a common virus passed from person to person through sexual contact. It can be spread even if there is no intercourse. There are more than 40 types of HPV that can infect the genital area, mouth and throat of both males and females.

How common is HPV?

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States.



Almost all sexually active people will get HPV some time in their lives. Every year in the U.S., about 6 million people get HPV, although most never know it. The infected person can spread the virus to other sexual partners without even knowing it.

HPV is most common in people in their late teens and early 20s. Up to 80 percent of teens and preteens are infected with HPV within three years of the first time they have sex.

What are the symptoms of HPV?

Some people will develop visible growths or bumps in the genital area (called genital warts). The virus lives in the body and usually causes no symptoms. Most men and women who have HPV do not even know they are infected. There is no cure for HPV infection and most of the time the infection will clear on its own, but other times it will not.

What is the connection between HPV and cancer?



In the U.S., one person every 20 minutes gets cancer caused by HPV. Almost all cervical cancer is caused by HPV. HPV is also a leading cause of many other common cancers including vulvar and vaginal cancers in women, penile cancers in men and anal and oropharyngeal (cancer of the mouth and throat) in men and women.

Each year in the U.S., about 18,000 HPV associated cancers affect women and 8,000 affect men.

How can I prevent HPV and its related diseases?

GET VACCINATED and

- ◆ practice abstinence.
- ◆ use condoms or other latex barriers for oral, anal and penile-vaginal sex to reduce the risk of getting or passing HPV (condoms do not provide complete protection against HPV).
- ◆ get regular pap tests to detect HPV lesions and treat them before they become cancerous (girls and women).
- ◆ get yearly annual pap smears if considered high risk.

What is the HPV vaccine?

There is one HPV vaccine available in the U.S., Gardasil 9[®]. It protects against nine strains of HPV, including strains that cause approximately 90 percent of all cervical cancers. Gardasil 9[®] also prevents most genital warts and other HPV-associated cancers.

Who should get the HPV vaccine?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) recommend routine HPV vaccination for all 11 to 12-year-old girls and boys. Ideally, the vaccine should be given prior to having any sexual contact, when you could have been exposed to HPV. The vaccine is designed to offer lifelong protection against HPV, but is not meant to encourage sexual activity. Catch-up vaccination is also recommended for females ages 13—26 and males ages 13—21. High risk males ages 22—26 should also be vaccinated.

What if I'm already sexually active?

If you are already sexually active, you should still get vaccinated against HPV.

What if I already have HPV?

You can still benefit from the vaccine's protection against other types of HPV. The vaccine protects against multiple types of HPV, and few people have them all. The vaccine has been shown to be about 99 percent effective in developing immunity in individuals already infected with one type of HPV.

