

Talking Points for HPV Vaccination

Are HPV vaccinations required?

No, HPV vaccinations are not required, but highly recommended for anyone 11 to 26 years of age. HPV vaccine is very important because it **prevents cancer**. A new study in *The Journal of Infectious Diseases* shows that since the introduction of the HPV vaccine in 2006, vaccine type HPV prevalence has decreased 56 percent among female teenagers age 14 to 19.

Why vaccinate children so young for HPV?

Like all vaccine preventable diseases, we want to vaccinate before the risk of exposure for the best chance at prevention. Measles and the other recommended childhood vaccines are a good example. Similarly, we want to vaccinate children well before they get exposed to HPV. Research has shown that getting the HPV vaccine does not make adolescents more likely to be sexually active or start having sex at a younger age. HPV is so common that almost everyone will be infected at some point. Even if your son/daughter waits until marriage to have sex, or only has one partner in the future, he/she could still be exposed.

Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): The HPV Vaccine is recommended at ages 11 or 12 years. “For the HPV vaccine to work best, it is very important for preteens to get all three doses (shots) long before any sexual activity with another person begins. It is possible to be infected with HPV the very first time they have sexual contact with another person. Also, the vaccine produces higher antibody that fights infection when given at this age compared to older ages.” <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/vac-faqs.htm>

Will my child need more than one HPV shot?

HPV vaccine is a series of three shots over six months. Getting all three shots of HPV vaccine will give your child the best possible **protection from cancer** caused by HPV. If you have started the series elsewhere and it is time for the second or third shot, your child can get it at the school vaccination clinic.

How can we increase our uptake and series completion?

To increase the number of patients finishing the three-dose HPV immunization series, make the follow-up appointment for the next dose before leaving the clinic and call as a reminder three to five days prior to the appointment.

Where can my child receive the HPV vaccine?

A primary care provider, whether it is a pediatrician or family practitioner, can administer HPV vaccine. Clinics, public health units and some pharmacies carry and have the authority to vaccinate with HPV vaccine.

This vaccine is expensive and we do not have insurance to cover the cost, what can we do?

Many providers in North Dakota are enrolled in the Vaccines For Children (VFC) Program including all local public health units. This means that they carry a supply of the vaccine that is specifically for Medicaid eligible, uninsured, underinsured, and American Indian children birth to 18 years of age. The cost is allowed to be \$20.99 per dose, but no enrolled provider can turn a client away for the inability to pay and no balances can be forwarded to collections. When presenting to a provider, it is important to inform the registrar of what the insurance status is for the child and present the appropriate insurance or Medicaid identification cards if applicable. The cost of the appointment is separate and is not subject to the same rules as the VFC-supplied vaccine.

Some local public health units hold immunization clinics in schools to make it easier to get children vaccinated. Contact your local public health unit to find out if they will be holding any school clinics where your child attends or look for the consent forms to come home with your child.

What if I am older than 18 and want to be vaccinated but do not have insurance?

The state supplies vaccines for adults to the same VFC-enrolled providers and family planning agencies. Adults that qualify for state-supplied HPV vaccine are age 19 to 26 and have no insurance or an insurance that does not cover the vaccine. The adult can be charged up to \$20.99 per dose of vaccine. The cost of the appointment is separate and is not subject to the same rules as the state-supplied vaccine.

Is HPV Vaccine safe?

The CDC monitors vaccine safety using the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) and tracks trends in real time. If any lot of HPV or any vaccine has a concern of viability or safety based on VAERS, the vaccine lot will be recalled immediately. This system helps the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) track new, or unexpected trends. From June 2006 to March 2013, more than 57 million doses of HPV vaccines were distributed. VAERS has received 22,000 adverse events – 92 percent were classified as non-serious: pain, swelling, redness at the injection site, fainting, nausea, headache, and fever. The reports peaked in 2008 and have decreased each year since.

VAERS reports that were coded as serious included reactions of headache, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, dizziness, fainting and generalized weakness. If coded as “serious,” it means that the event resulted in hospitalization, prolongation of an existing hospitalization, permanent disability, life-threatening illness or death. Of all deaths reported (85) after receiving HPV vaccine, none were able to be attributed to receiving the vaccination. There is no pattern with respect to time after vaccination, no consistent vaccine dose number or combination of vaccines given, and no diagnosis at the time of death that can suggest that the vaccine caused the death.

Why should I/my child get the vaccine if it doesn't protect against all HPV strains?

There are many strains of HPV. The two currently available brands contain HPV strains 16 and 18, which are known to cause 70 percent of all cervical cancer cases. While most HPV infections will resolve on their own over time, some will cause cervical, anal, vaginal, vulvar, penile, and oropharyngeal cancers. In addition to cancer, HPV causes genital warts that are not life

threatening, but treatment can be very uncomfortable. Receiving the full series of HPV vaccine will prevent the most common strains linked to cervical and other cancers.

Why should my son get the HPV vaccine if it only causes cervical cancer?

This is a common misconception. HPV causes cervical, anal, vaginal, vulvar, penile, and oropharyngeal cancers and genital warts. Males that are exposed and infected with any strain of HPV can pass it to their partner. Many males when asked if they would be vaccinated if they knew they could prevent passing a potentially cancer causing virus to their current or future partners, agreed that they would rather be vaccinated. The prevention of HPV spreading is not only a female responsibility. HPV affects millions of males annually.

Sources to develop this document include:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/for-hcp-tipsheet-hpv.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/vac-faqs.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2013/p0619-hpv-vaccinations.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/vfcprogram/>

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