

# Why HPV Vaccine is Important to My Family: The Story of a Cervical Cancer Survivor

*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

Hi, my name is Jackie. I am a mom to a couple of wonderful kids and I'm a cervical cancer survivor. This is my story.

Several years ago, before my daughter was born, I had some abnormal Pap smears that required further testing. My doctor told me that I had the type of human papillomavirus, or HPV, that can cause cancer.

After my daughter was born, my Pap tests all came back normal. It wasn't until the first Pap test after my son was born that the result came back as abnormal, and my doctor told me that I needed a biopsy to find out why. The biopsy showed that I had cervical cancer, and my doctor sent me to an oncologist—a doctor who specializes in treating cancer. Fortunately, my cancer was at an early stage, but I did need to have a total hysterectomy. This was the worst news I had ever received about my health.

My husband and I have been together for 15 years, and we are so grateful for our two wonderful children, but we were hoping to have at least one more baby—which isn't going to happen now.

Even though my cancer was found early, the complications continue to impact my life and my family. I feel like I'm at the doctor all the time and constantly worried about my follow-up tests. Plus, all these medical appointments are one more thing that I need to juggle and take so much time away from my family, friends, and daily responsibilities.

The worst part is that every time the phone rings, I'm terrified it's my oncologist calling and I hold my breath until I get the results. I'm hopeful that I will live a long and healthy life, but thought of cancer returning is always lurking in the back of my mind. And I know I'm one of the lucky ones.

I would never wish this on anyone and I will do everything in my power to keep my son and daughter from going through this horrible experience. I know that I can't keep them from getting a lot of cancers but I *do* know that most HPV cancers can be prevented with the HPV vaccine. And I am choosing to protect my children by getting them vaccinated on time. It's as simple as taking them to the doctor for the HPV vaccine as soon as they turn 11. I tell everyone—my family, my friends, and you—go get your children the HPV vaccine series to protect your family from the cancers caused by HPV.

*[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.*