



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

HPV Prevention

Human Papillomavirus-Associated Cancers — United States 2008-2012

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

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Human papillomavirus, or HPV, is a virus that can cause certain cancers and is the most commonly sexually transmitted infection in the U.S.

Dr. Laura Viens is a researcher with CDC's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of getting vaccinated against HPV. Welcome to the show, Laura.

[Dr. Viens] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Laura, how many people get HPV each year in the U.S.?

[Dr. Viens] HPV is a very, very common infection. About 14 million people, including teens, become newly infected with HPV each year. About 79 millions, most in their late teens and early 20s, are infected with HPV.

[Dr. Gaynes] How is HPV transmitted?

[Dr. Viens] HPV is transmitted through intimate skin-to-skin contact. You can get HPV by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has the virus. It is most commonly spread during vaginal or anal sex. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection. Anyone who's sexually active can get HPV, even if you've had sex with only one person. HPV is so common that nearly all sexually active men and women get it at some point in their lives.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the most common symptoms of HPV?

[Dr. Viens] Most people who are infected with HPV will not have any symptoms. Some infections can cause genital warts. Fortunately, the immune system can get rid of most of these infections; usually, within two years. Lasting infections can lead to cancer.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, do most HPV infections result in cancer?

[Dr. Viens] Since HPV is such a common infection, the good news is that the vast majority of these infections will go away on their own. However, when a body's immune system can't get rid of an infection, it can linger over time and turn normal cells into abnormal cells and then

cancer. HPV is linked to almost 39,000 new cases of cancer every year. But the really good news is that we can now prevent cancer with the HPV vaccine.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, who needs to receive the HPV vaccine?

[Dr. Viens] We recommend HPV vaccination for 11- or 12-year old boys and girls. For those that did not receive the vaccine, there's a catch-up vaccine available through age 21 in males and 26 in females.

[Dr. Gaynes] Laura, how are we doing with the HPV vaccine?

[Dr. Viens] We aren't doing as well as we could be. Four out of 10 adolescent girls and six out of 10 adolescent boys have not started the HPV vaccine series and are vulnerable to developing cancers when they're older, caused by HPV infections. We are doing better in recent years, particularly in states with dedicated programs working hard on this issue but we are still missing crucial opportunities to vaccinate boys and girls. HPV vaccine is safe, effective, and provides lasting protection.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about HPV?

[Dr. Viens] Listeners should go to the main CDC page, cdc.gov, and type "cancer" and "HPV" into the search box.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Laura. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Laura Viens about the importance of getting the HPV vaccine.

Remember: The HPV vaccine is recommended for boys and girls at age 11 to 12 years. Catch-up vaccines are recommended for men through age 21 and women through age 26. Make an appointment for you or your child to get the HPV vaccine.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for A Cup of Health with CDC.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.