



Get your kids HPV vaccine now to prevent cancer later

HPV is short for human papillomavirus. About 20 million people in the United States, most in their teens and early 20s, are infected with HPV.

Not only does HPV cause almost all cervical cancers in women, it also responsible for other types of cancer. HPV causes mouth and throat cancer, as well as anal cancer in both women and men. HPV can cause cancers of the vulva and vagina in women, and cancer of the penis in men. Each year, there are about 18,000 women and 7,000 men affected by HPV-related cancers in the United States.

Most of the HPV infections that cause these cancers could be prevented with vaccination.

HPV-related cancers can be devastating. Jacquelyn, a cancer survivor and mother of two preschoolers, shares her story. Soon after her second child was born, Jacquelyn was diagnosed with cervical cancer and needed a total hysterectomy. “My husband and I had been together for 15 years, and we were planning to have more children—that isn’t going to happen now,” says Jacquelyn.

Although they caught Jacquelyn’s cervical cancer early, she still has medical appointments taking time away from her family, friends and work. “Every time the doctor calls, I hold my breath until I get the results. Cancer is always in the back of my mind.”

HPV vaccines offer the greatest health benefits to individuals who receive all three doses before having any type of sexual activity. That’s why HPV vaccination is recommended for preteen girls and boys at age 11 or 12 years.

The connection between vaccinating kids now to protect them from cancer later isn’t lost on Jacquelyn. “I will protect my son and daughter by getting them the HPV vaccine as soon as they each turn 11. I tell everyone to get their children the HPV vaccine series to protect them from these kinds of cancers.”

HPV vaccines are given in a series of 3 shots over 6 months. It is very important to complete all 3 shots to get the best protection. More than 46 million doses of HPV vaccine have been given out, and vaccine studies continue to show that HPV vaccines are safe.

If your son or daughter hasn’t started or finished the HPV vaccine series yet—it’s not too late! Now is a good time to ask their doctor or nurse about vaccines for your preteens and teens. Visit www.cdc.gov/hpv to learn more about HPV and HPV vaccines.

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