

Protecting Your Child: HPV

WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW

What is HPV (Human Papillomavirus)?



HPV (human papillomavirus) is a very common virus. Most people will get HPV at some point in their lives, often without knowing it.

The virus is usually spread through close skin-to-skin contact. Some types of HPV can cause cancer years later, including cervical and other cancers.

Who's most vulnerable? Children and teens before exposure to HPV. Unvaccinated teens and adults.



The **HPV vaccine** is one of the **most effective tools** we have to prevent cancer.



The Vaccine

- Used in the U.S. since 2006, with many years of safety monitoring.

How it works:

- Helps the immune system block HPV infection before it can cause disease or cancer.

Dosage:

- **2 doses** if started before the 15th birthday (6-12 months apart).
- **3 doses** if started at age 15 or older, or for people with weakened immune systems.
- Mild side effects: redness, soreness, or swelling at injection site, headache, mild fever, feeling tired.



Some teens may feel lightheaded or faint - sitting or lying down for 15 minutes after vaccination helps prevent injury.

Is the Vaccine Safe? Yes.

- Proven safe over time.
- Serious side effects are very rare.
- Proven **cancer prevention benefit**
 - Protects against the HPV types most likely to cause cancer.
- Works best when given **before exposure** to the virus.
- Ongoing safety monitoring by **VAERS** and the **Vaccine Safety Datalink**.

Support & Guidance

Talk to your pediatrician or family doctor. They can help you decide when to start or complete the HPV vaccine series.

Trusted Resources: AAP HealthyChildren.org

Alternatives?

- Screening tests can help find early changes, but they **do not prevent HPV infection**.
- Vaccination is the **best way to prevent HPV-related cancers**.



Delaying vaccination leaves your child unprotected during key years.

Choosing prevention is an act of care. Asking questions helps protect your child's future health. We're here to help you feel confident and informed.