

2x10

CANCER PREVENTION THROUGH HPV VACCINATION IN YOUR PRACTICE



SITUATION

Starting the HPV vaccination series at age 9 is recommended by the American Cancer Society (ACS) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

BACKGROUND

Disease Incidence and Severity

About 13 million Americans, both men and women and including teens, become infected with HPV each year. **Almost every unvaccinated person who is sexually active will get HPV at some time in their life.**

HPV is transmitted by more than just sexual intercourse, including hand to genital, mouth to genital, and genital to genital. Infected individuals may not have any signs or symptoms or could develop symptoms years after encountering someone who was infected. A person with HPV can pass the infection to someone even when they have no signs or symptoms. Most HPV infections will go away on their own. But infections that don't go away can cause certain types of cancer.

Every year in the United States, 36,500 people are estimated to be diagnosed with a cancer related to HPV. Although cervical cancer is the most well-known, there are other types of cancer caused by HPV, such as oropharyngeal, anal, vulvar, vagina, and penile. The vaccine is so effective when given prior to exposure it that can prevent more than 90% of these cancers.

The HPV Vaccine is Safe, and It Works

The HPV vaccine isn't new. More than **15 years** of monitoring and research have resulted in reassuring evidence that receiving an HPV vaccination provides safe, effective, and long-lasting protection.

Within 12 years of vaccine introduction, HPV infections decreased 88% among 14–19-year-old females and 81% among 20–24-year-old females in the United States. Additionally, data shows that the HPV vaccine provides ongoing protection, lasting for more than 10 years without becoming less effective.

Why Age 9?

The benefits of recommending at age 9 include:

- Offers more time for completion of the series prior to age 13
- Results in a better immune response
- Only 2 doses are needed, rather than 3
- Increases the likelihood of vaccinating prior to first HPV exposure
- Decreases questions about sexual activity by parents and guardians
- Decreases requests only for vaccines that are required for school

ASSESSMENT

Recommendations for the HPV vaccine are not happening early and often enough. The best indicator of vaccine acceptance is a strong, presumptive recommendation from the individual's healthcare provider. We must work together to change the conversation about the HPV vaccine to protect more people from HPV infection and associated cancers.

Despite the vaccine being out for 15 years HPV immunization rates still significantly lag in comparison to Tdap and Meningococcal (MCV4) which are due at the same time.

While South Dakota's percentage of 13–17-year-olds who are up to date is approximately 80-85%, the series completion rate for 11-12-year-olds is much less. Administration after the age of 12 is considered late and catch-up. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic led to substantial declines in HPV vaccinations among adolescents. **A proactive approach is needed to ensure vaccination rates rebound quickly.**

RECOMMENDATION

Start routinely recommending HPV vaccination at age 9.

Every member of a practice plays a critical role in understanding and advocating for HPV vaccination as cancer prevention and should work together to reduce missed opportunities for vaccination. National survey results from CDC indicates that clinicians underestimate the value parents place on HPV vaccination, but a recommendation from their health care team is the number one reason parents decide to vaccinate.

How to do this:

- 1 Provide a strong, presumptive recommendation by recommending all vaccines the same way and on the same day.
- 2 Utilize all office visits (nurse or provider) to provide vaccination and keep patients up to date.
- 3 Schedule the return appointment for the second dose before the patient leaves the appointment.
- 4 Be prepared to answer parents' questions. Have resources ready to provide and emphasize that the vaccine is safe, effective, and prevents cancer.
- 5 Empower every member of your team to become an HPV vaccine champion.
- 6 Create a plan and implement the structural changes needed within your organization to start vaccinating at age 9.

For more resources, visit www.immunizesd.org/hpv-provider, or scan the QR code below.



www.immunizesd.org/hpv-provider



Resources:

1. Cancers Caused by HPV are Preventable. (2021, November 1). Retrieved from Centers of Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/hcp/protecting-patients.html>
2. HPV Vaccine Safety and Effectiveness Data. (2021, November 1). Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/hcp/vaccine-safety-data.html>
3. Reasons to Get HPV Vaccine. (2021, November 10). Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/parents/vaccine/six-reasons.html>