

## VACCINE INFORMATION STATEMENT

# HPV Vaccine Gardasil® (Human Papillomavirus)

### What You Need to Know

Many Vaccine Information Statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See [www.immunize.org/vis](http://www.immunize.org/vis)

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## 1 What is HPV?

Genital **human papillomavirus (HPV)** is the most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States. More than half of sexually active men and women are infected with HPV at some time in their lives.

About 20 million Americans are currently infected, and about 6 million more get infected each year. HPV is usually spread through sexual contact.

Most HPV infections don't cause any symptoms, and go away on their own. But HPV can cause **cervical cancer** in women. Cervical cancer is the 2nd leading cause of cancer deaths among women around the world. In the United States, about 12,000 women get cervical cancer every year and about 4,000 are expected to die from it.

HPV is also associated with several less common cancers, such as vaginal and vulvar cancers in women, and anal and oropharyngeal (back of the throat, including base of tongue and tonsils) cancers in both men and women. HPV can also cause genital warts and warts in the throat.

There is no cure for HPV infection, but some of the problems it causes can be treated.

## 2 HPV vaccine: Why get vaccinated?

The HPV vaccine you are getting is one of two vaccines that can be given to prevent HPV. It may be given to both males and females.

This vaccine can prevent most cases of cervical cancer in females, if it is given before exposure to the virus. In addition, it can prevent vaginal and vulvar cancer in females, and genital warts and anal cancer in both males and females.

Protection from HPV vaccine is expected to be long-lasting. But vaccination is not a substitute for cervical cancer screening. Women should still get regular Pap tests.

## 3 Who should get this HPV vaccine and when?

*HPV vaccine is given as a 3-dose series*

1st Dose	Now
2nd Dose	1 to 2 months after Dose 1
3rd Dose	6 months after Dose 1

Additional (booster) doses are not recommended.

### Routine vaccination

- This HPV vaccine is recommended for girls and boys **11 or 12 years of age**. It *may* be given starting at age 9.

### Why is HPV vaccine recommended at 11 or 12 years of age?

HPV infection is easily acquired, even with only one sex partner. That is why it is important to get HPV vaccine before any sexual contact takes place. Also, response to the vaccine is better at this age than at older ages.

### Catch-up vaccination

This vaccine is recommended for the following people who have not completed the 3-dose series:

- Females 13 through 26 years of age.
- Males 13 through 21 years of age.

This vaccine *may* be given to men 22 through 26 years of age who have not completed the 3-dose series.

It is *recommended* for men through age 26 who have sex with men or whose immune system is weakened because of HIV infection, other illness, or medications.

HPV vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines.



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