

# Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is HPV?

HPV is a very contagious virus that causes cancer, skin lesions, and genital warts. About 13 million people get infected with HPV every year.

### How is HPV spread?

HPV is spread through intimate skin-to-skin contact with an infected person. A person can pass the virus to another person even if they are not showing symptoms, or if they are not aware they have the virus. The HPV vaccine provides protection long before having contact with the virus and can prevent almost all cancers caused by HPV infection. HPV vaccination is cancer prevention.

### Is the HPV vaccine safe?

Yes, the Gardasil 9 vaccine is safe and effective! The safety of Gardasil 9 has been analyzed in over 160 studies and is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

### How many doses of the vaccine are there?

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) recommends starting the Gardasil series at 11-12 years old but can be started as early as 9 years old. Teenagers who start the HPV vaccine series on or after their 15th birthday need 3 doses, given over 6 months. If your teenager is not yet vaccinated, talk to their doctor about Gardasil 9 as soon as possible.

### What if my teen is behind on vaccination?

If your teen isn't vaccinated yet, talk to their doctor about doing so as soon as possible. You can take advantage of any of your child's doctor visits to get recommended vaccines and physical exams. Scan the QR code on the bottom of the next page for more information.

## How well does the vaccine work?

The vaccine works extremely well and is effective in preventing HPV. The vaccine can prevent HPV related cancers by up to 90%.

## Are there any side effects?

Like any vaccine, possible side effects can occur but the benefits of the vaccine far outweigh any potential side effects. The most common side effects are mild and include: soreness and redness in the arm that the vaccination was given, headache, nausea, dizziness or fainting. To prevent fainting, the patient should be seated or lying down during vaccination and for 15 minutes afterwards.

## What should I expect at the doctor's office?

The vaccine will be placed in the upper arm. There may be some discomfort or a pinching sensation. After receiving the vaccine, you will be asked to remain seated for about 15 minutes to be observed by a nurse. Your arm may have redness at the injection site and feel tender for a few days after receiving the vaccine.



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