

A Vaccine Can Prevent Throat Cancer

Key facts about Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

● Millions of Americans have HPV:



About 79 million people are infected with HPV.¹

Each day, 12,000 people between ages 15 and 24 are infected with HPV.²

In most people, the body is able to clear the infection on its own, but sometimes HPV remains for many years. Research shows HPV can be transmitted to a child during pregnancy.³

● HPV causes cancer:

In some people with HPV, their infection will lead to one of six types of cancer. The cancers caused by HPV often develop years or even decades later after a person is first infected.⁴

Each year, more than 35,000 HPV-caused cancers are diagnosed.

Black and Hispanic women have higher rates of some cancers linked to HPV than women of other races or ethnicities.⁵



● HPV causes 70% of throat cancers:



These cancers occur in the oropharynx, the part of the throat just behind the mouth.⁶

Symptoms of oropharyngeal cancer include pain when swallowing and a long-lasting sore throat, so dental providers should consider this if a patient mentions these conditions.

70% HPV

30% other

● Poor oral health is a risk factor:

People with oral HPV are more likely to rate their oral health as fair or poor.

Researchers found that poor oral health is a risk factor of oral HPV infection.⁷



● The HPV vaccine saves lives:



Receiving both doses* of the HPV vaccine can prevent more than 90% of the six types of cancers that this virus can cause. Health experts recommend HPV vaccination for girls and boys ages 11–12 years to protect against these cancers.

Vaccination is also recommended for everyone through age 26, if they aren't already vaccinated.⁴

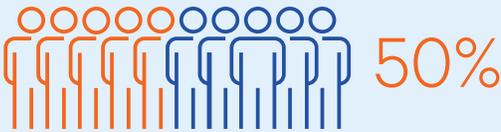
* The recommended number of doses for the HPV vaccine is two for all adolescents: (1) before their 15th birthday and (2) 6-12 months after the first dose (CDC, 2020). See <https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/hcp/schedules-recommendations.html#:~:text=CDC%20recommends%20two%20doses%20of%206%E2%80%9312%20month%20schedule>.

The HPV vaccine is safe:

With more than **120 million doses of the vaccine distributed**, the vaccine has a **solid safety record**.⁸



Many teens aren't vaccinated:



Only about **half of U.S. teens** have been vaccinated against HPV with the proper dosage and recommended schedule.⁹

This is why health experts call the vaccine “an underutilized cancer control practice.”¹ The COVID-19 pandemic has been linked with a drop in the rate of childhood vaccinations, including HPV.¹⁰

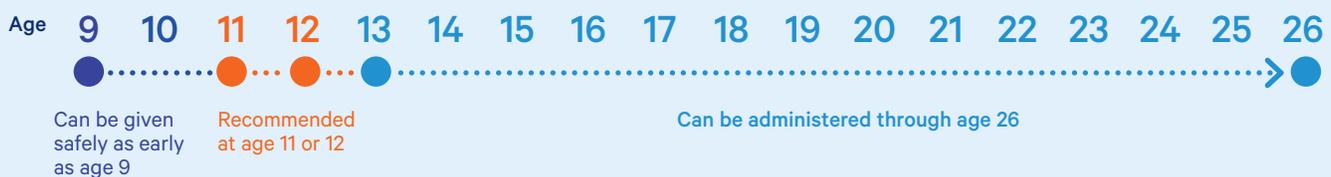
A role for dental providers:

Dental professionals have a vital role to play. They can talk with caregivers of children ages 9-12 years, recommend the HPV vaccine for girls and boys in this age group, and refer them to their pediatrician to get vaccinated.¹¹ Although **the vaccine is recommended at**

age 11 or 12, it can be given safely as early as age 9 and can be administered through age 26.¹² Many parents and young adults do not know HPV is linked to various cancers.¹³ This is a good reason to ask young adults if they have been vaccinated. Your question could save their lives.



HPV Vaccine Recommendations



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