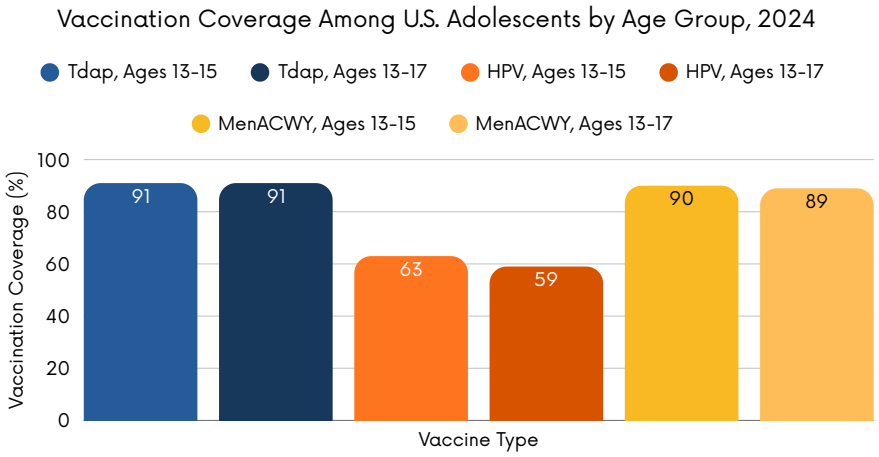
Conversations with Parents about HPV Vaccine

HPV vaccination rates are LOWER than you think!



https://www.cdc.gov/teenvaxview/interactive/index.html

Why you should start recommending HPV vaccination at age 9

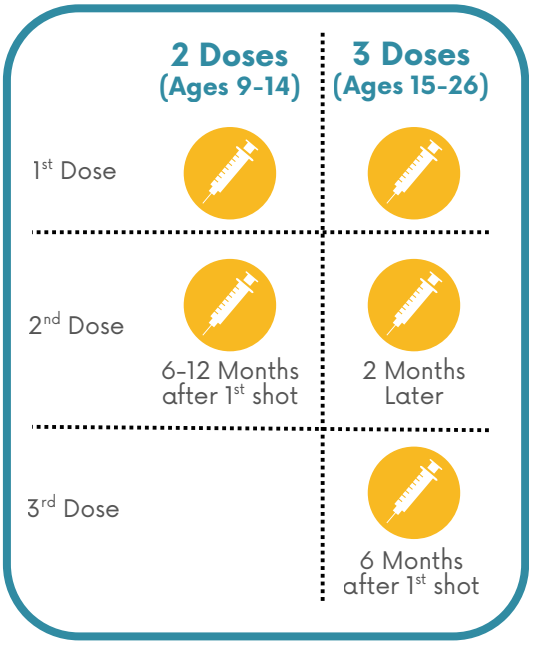
Why should you recommend HPV vaccine?

The HPV vaccine protects against several types of cancer that are caused by HPV, including cervical, vaginal, penile, and anal cancer, as well as certain types of mouth and throat cancers. Studies have shown that getting vaccinated earlier leads to better protection against HPV.

HPV Vaccine Schedule

- Ages 9 – 14 years: 2 doses, 6-12 months apart
- Ages 15-26 years: 3 doses, given 0, 1-2 months, and 6 months apart
- Immunocompromised patients: all 3 doses

Receiving a single dose of the HPV vaccine may provide some protection, but it is **recommended** to complete the full series for best protection.



PROVIDER TALKING POINTS

- "Your child is due for HPV vaccine today. This vaccine can prevent six types of cancer, and I recommend it for all children starting at age 9."
- "HPV vaccination works best when given before exposure to HPV, and younger children have a stronger immune response."
- "HPV vaccine is safe, effective, and routinely recommended, just like Tdap and meningococcal vaccines."
- "Let's give the first dose today and schedule the next dose before you leave."

Connecticut CANCER Partnership
The Power of Unity

3 Keys to a Strong Recommendation

1. **Lead with Cancer Prevention**
   Frame every HPV vaccine conversation as cancer prevention.

   Example:
   "Today your child is due for vaccines that prevent meningitis, HPV cancers, and pertussis."

2. **Present All Vaccines Same Day, Same Way**
   Recommend HPV vaccine the same way you recommend Tdap and meningococcal vaccines.

   Avoid: "Would you like to talk about HPV vaccine today?"
   Instead: "Your child needs three (3) vaccines today to protect against meningitis, HPV-related cancers, and pertussis."

3. **Recommend with Confidence**
   Give a clear recommendation.
   Don't anticipate concerns before they arise.

   Instead: "I strongly recommend HPV vaccine today because it provides better protection against several HPV-related cancers."

WHAT PROVIDERS ARE HEARING (AND HOW TO RESPOND)

"My child is too young."
This is the right age because HPV vaccine works best before exposure to HPV and gives better protection when started earlier.

"I hate shots."
No one likes shots, but the infections you may get if not vaccinated could be worse.

"Will it affect fertility?"
No. HPV vaccination does not affect the ability to have children in the future. In fact, HPV vaccination helps prevent HPV-related cancers and other diseases. Some HPV-related cancers and their treatments can affect reproductive health and fertility.

"Does it encourage sexual activity?"
No. The research shows HPV vaccination does not lead to earlier sexual activity or riskier behavior.

"Can we wait?"
I strongly recommend starting today. I don't think we should wait because delaying leaves your child unprotected, and we may miss the chance to complete the series.

QUOTE FROM A FELLOW PROVIDER

"As oncologists, we see firsthand the devastating impact of HPV-related cancers—many of which are now preventable through vaccination. Pediatricians are at the front line of cancer prevention, and every HPV vaccine recommendation is an opportunity to reduce future cases of cervical, anal, oropharyngeal, and other HPV-associated cancers, saving lives for decades to come."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

American Cancer Society
Prevention facts about six cancers you can prevent with HPV vaccine.
cancer.org

HPV Vaccination Roundtable
Research to reinforce the recommendation to start offering HPV vaccines at age nine and resource library.
hpvroundtable.org

American Academy of Pediatrics
Vaccine overview, recommendations, and professional toolkits/resources.
aap.org

Connecticut Cancer Partnership
Resource on how to make healthier choices and finding supportive services.
ctcancerpartnership.org

Connecticut Department of Public Health - Immunizations
Immunization guide to provide clear, accurate information for parents and caregivers.
portal.ct.gov/dph

Citations

1. Bruni, L., et al. (2019). Human papillomavirus vaccination: Global epidemiology and effectiveness. Vaccine. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2019.07.088
2. Perkins, R. B., et al. (2018). Missed opportunities for HPV vaccination in adolescents. Journal of Adolescent Health.
3. Harvard Medical School. (2018). HPV vaccination not linked to riskier sexual behavior.
4. American Cancer Society. (2021). HPV vaccination: Cancer prevention communication tip sheet.