

What Can You Do to Prevent HPV and Cervical Cancer?

Local Information to Help You Get the Medical Assistance You Need



HPV VACCINE

HPV is a common sexually transmitted disease that can cause genital warts and cervical cancer (and sometimes other cancers.) There are HPV vaccines that are highly recommended, effective, and safe.

- Doctors recommend that a young person (both male and female) get immunized as early as age 11–12. The vaccine is most effective before a person becomes sexually active.
- The cost of the vaccine is usually covered by most insurances. Check with your insurance plan.
- If not, there are over 44,000 sites nationwide that provide the federal Vaccine for Children (VFC) program. For more information on the VFC program, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/contacts-state.html.

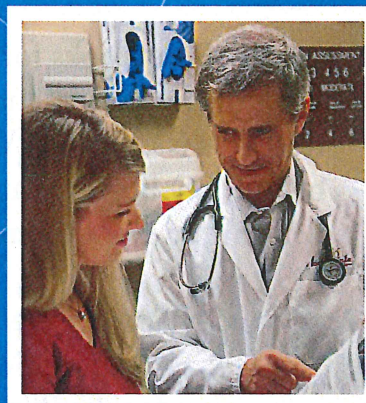
GET YOUR PAP TESTS

A Pap test can be done during your regular pelvic exam appointments with your OB/GYN or primary care provider.

- Pap screen testing should begin at age 21. Routine screening is recommended every three years for women 21–65 years old. For women 30 to 65 who have a normal Pap test with a negative HPV test, screening can be done every five years.

- Women with certain risk factors, such as being HIV positive (carrying the virus that causes AIDS), a weakened immune system due to chemotherapy, organ transplant, chronic steroid use, or have a history of diethylstilbestrol (DES) exposure before birth, should continue to be screened more frequently.

- Pap tests are covered by most insurances, however if you find that you are not covered, there are options for you. The Wisconsin Well Woman Program provides financial assistance to eligible women (residents of Wisconsin) for breast and cervical services. Many times you can use your regular doctor, this is financial assistance and not a clinic. Find out more at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wwwp or by calling 608-242-6385. You are encouraged to call to talk with a specialist about your possible benefits. The website is easy to navigate and has a list of program eligibilities. Illinois residents can call 888-522-1282 for similar programs.



VISIT YOUR DOCTOR

Beloit Health System physicians and advanced practice providers will help you determine the best course of action.

For more information on our providers, please visit our website at www.BeloitHealthSystem.org to see our physician photos, bios and contact information.

Or call 608-364-2200 to reach Beloit Clinic staff, who can help you find a physician.



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Cervical Cancer Screening Tests

How can I prevent cervical cancer?

You can **prevent** cervical cancer with regular screening tests, like the Pap test and the HPV DNA test (HPV test). The **Pap test** is a **screening test** for cervical cancer. It looks for abnormal cells on your cervix that could turn into cancer over time. That way, problems can be found and treated before they ever turn into cancer. All women should start getting regular Pap tests at age 21.

An **HPV test** looks for the virus that can cause abnormal cells on your cervix. For women ages 30 and older, the HPV test can be used along with the Pap test. This is called HPV co-testing. Screening tests can find early problems before they become cancer. That way, problems can be found and removed before they ever become cancer.



Cervical cancer often does not cause symptoms until it is advanced. So it is important to get screened even when you feel healthy.

You took the first step to prevent cervical cancer by getting a Pap test. If you're reading this booklet, you may also have received the HPV test with your Pap test. These tests are often done at the same time.

The Pap and HPV tests look for different things:

The Pap test

Checks your cervix for abnormal cells that could turn into cervical cancer.

The HPV test

Checks your cervix for the virus (HPV) that can cause abnormal cells and cervical cancer.

“HPV” stands for “human papillomavirus.”
For more definitions, see the glossary.



As parents, you do everything you can to protect your children's health for now and for the future. Today, there is a strong weapon to prevent several types of cancer in our kids: the HPV vaccine.

HPV and Cancer

HPV is short for Human Papillomavirus, a common virus. In the United States each year, there are about 17,500 women and 9,300 men affected by HPV-related cancers. Many of these cancers **could be prevented with vaccination**. In both women and men, HPV can cause anal cancer and mouth/throat (oropharyngeal) cancer. It can also cause cancers of the cervix, vulva and vagina in women; and cancer of the penis in men.

For women, screening is available to detect most cases of cervical cancer with a Pap smear. Unfortunately, there is no routine screening for other HPV-related cancers for women or men, and these cancers can cause pain, suffering, or even death. **That is why a vaccine that prevents most of these types of cancers is so important.**

More about HPV

HPV is a virus passed from one person to another during skin-to-skin sexual contact, including vaginal, oral, and anal sex. HPV is most common in people in their late teens and early 20s. Almost all sexually active people will get HPV at some time in their lives, though most will never even know it.

Most of the time, the body naturally fights off HPV, before HPV causes any health problems. But in some cases, the body does not fight off HPV, and HPV can cause health problems, like cancer and genital warts. Genital warts are not a life-threatening disease, but they can cause emotional stress, and their treatment can be very uncomfortable. About 1 in 100 sexually active adults in the United States have genital warts at any given time.

Why does my child need this now?

HPV vaccines offer the best protection to girls and boys who receive all three vaccine doses and have time to develop an immune response **before** they begin sexual activity with another person. This is not to say that your preteen is ready to have sex. In fact, it's just the opposite—it's important to get your child protected before you or your child have to think about this issue. The immune response to this vaccine is better in preteens, and this could mean better protection for your child. ❖

HPV vaccination is recommended for preteen girls and boys at age 11 or 12 years

HPV vaccine is also recommended for girls ages 13 through 26 years and for boys ages 13 through 21 years, who have not yet been vaccinated. So if your son or daughter hasn't started or finished the HPV vaccine series—**it's not too late!** Talk to their doctor about getting it for them now.

Two vaccines—Cervarix and Gardasil—are available to prevent the HPV types that cause most cervical cancers and anal cancers. One of the HPV vaccines, Gardasil, also prevents vulvar and vaginal cancers in women and genital warts in both women and men. Only Gardasil has been tested and licensed for use in males. Both vaccines are given in a series of 3 shots over 6 months. The best way to remember to get your child all three shots is to make an appointment for the second and third shot before you leave the doctor's office after the first shot.

Is the HPV vaccine safe?

Yes. Both HPV vaccines were studied in tens of thousands of people around the world. More than 57 million doses have been distributed to date, and there have been no serious safety concerns. Vaccine safety continues to be monitored by CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

These studies continue to show that HPV vaccines are safe.

The most common side effects reported are mild. They include: pain where the shot was given (usually the arm), fever, dizziness, and nausea. ▶



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You may have heard that some kids faint when they get vaccinated. Fainting is common with preteens and teens for many medical procedures, not just the HPV shot. Be sure that your child eats something before going to get the vaccine. It's a good idea to have your child sit or lay down while getting any vaccine, and for 15 minutes afterwards, to prevent fainting and any injuries that could happen from fainting.

The HPV vaccine can safely be given at the same time as the other recommended vaccines, including the Tdap, meningococcal, and influenza vaccines. Learn more about all of the recommended preteen vaccines at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens

Help paying for vaccines

The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides vaccines for children ages 19 years and younger who are under-insured, not insured, Medicaid-eligible, or American Indian/Alaska Native. Learn more about the VFC program at www.cdc.gov/Features/VFCprogram/

Whether you have insurance, or your child is VFC-eligible, some doctors' offices may also charge a fee to give the vaccines. ■

Jacquelyn's story: "I was healthy—and got cervical cancer."

When I was in my late 20's and early 30's, in the years before my daughter was born, I had some abnormal Pap smears and had to have further testing. I was told I had the kind of HPV that can cause cancer and mild dysplasia.

For three more years, I had normal tests. But when I got my first Pap test after my son was born, they told me I needed a biopsy. The results came back as cancer, and my doctor sent me to an oncologist. Fortunately, the cancer was at an early stage. My lymph nodes were clear, and I didn't need radiation. But I did need to have a total hysterectomy.

My husband and I have been together for 15 years, and we were planning to have more children. We are so grateful for our two wonderful children, but we were hoping for more—which is not going to happen now.

The bottom line is they caught the cancer early, but the complications continue to impact my life and my family. For the next few years, I have to get pelvic exams and Pap smears every few months, the doctors measure tumor markers, and I have to have regular x-rays and ultrasounds, just in case. I have so many medical appointments that are taking time away from my family, my friends, and my job.

Worse, every time the phone rings, and I know it's my oncologist calling, I hold my breath until I get the results. I'm hopeful I can live a full and healthy life, but cancer is always in the back of my mind.

In a short period of time, I went from being healthy and planning more children to all of a sudden having a radical hysterectomy and trying to make sure I don't have cancer again. It's kind of overwhelming. And I am one of the lucky ones!

Ultimately I need to make sure I'm healthy and there for my children. I want to be around to see their children grow up.

I will do everything to keep my son and daughter from going through this. I will get them both the HPV vaccine as soon as they turn 11. I tell everyone—my friends, my family—to get their children the HPV vaccine series to protect them from this kind of cancer. ❖



What about boys?

One HPV vaccine—Gardasil—is for boys too! This vaccine can help prevent boys from getting infected with the types of HPV that can cause cancers of the mouth/throat, penis and anus. The vaccine can also help prevent genital warts. HPV vaccination of males is also likely to benefit females by reducing the spread of HPV viruses.

Learn more about HPV and HPV vaccine at www.cdc.gov/hpv

For more information about the vaccines recommended for preteens and teens:

800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens>