**HPV Immunization**

**What is human papillomavirus (HPV)?**
Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a sexually transmitted virus with several strains. Some strains may cause genital warts, other strains may cause cancer. HPV is responsible for 90% of cervical and anal cancers, 70% of oropharyngeal cancers, 70% of vaginal and vulvar cancers, and 60% of penile cancers. The CDC estimates that nine out of ten individuals will contract some form of HPV in their lifetime.

**How can I keep myself or my child safe from the effects of HPV?**
One important step to prevent contracting 9 strains of HPV known to cause warts and cancer - say YES to the HPV vaccine series! Studies show that vaccination could prevent more than 90% of cancer caused by HPV.

**Who should receive the vaccine?**
The vaccine series is recommended for boys and girls ages 11 to 12; however it can be given as young as age 9. The vaccine is recommended for everyone who has not received it through age 26. Some adults age 27 to 45 may also benefit from receiving the vaccine.

**How many vaccines do I need?**
If the series is started before age 15, only two injections are needed. Those beginning the series at age 15 or older will need three injections to complete the series. The series can be completed in 6-12 months.

**Is the HPV vaccine safe?**
All HPV vaccines on the market have proven to be extremely safe. Each vaccine underwent strict safety testing before it was licensed by the FDA. Additionally, research and monitoring have demonstrated the safety and efficacy of the vaccine for over 15 years that the vaccine program has been operating in the US.

**Who should not get the vaccine?**
You shouldn’t get the vaccine if you have a yeast allergy or an allergy to any of the ingredients in the vaccine. If you are pregnant, vaccination should be delayed until after pregnancy.

**I have read stories on social media about this vaccine. Where can I find reliable information?**
It is important to have a conversation with your healthcare provider, and you can read about the vaccine on the CDC website: [https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/](https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/)

**What next?**
Go see your healthcare provider and ask for the vaccine!

For more information, read Andrea Taylor’s article in the October issue of the Nurse Practitioner journal, entitled, “Increasing human papillomavirus immunization in the primary care setting.”

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**Age at first dose** | **Dose Number 2** | **Dose Number 3**
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9 years until 15th birthday | 6-12 months after dose number 1 | Not needed
15 years through age 45 | 1-2 months after dose number 1 | 6 months after dose number 1, with a 12-week minimum between dose numbers 2 and 3