

# Tips and Time-savers for Addressing Parents' Top Questions about HPV VACCINE

## HPV VACCINE IS CANCER PREVENTION

Recommend the HPV vaccine series the same way you recommend the other adolescent vaccines. For example, you can say “Your child needs these shots today,” and name all of the vaccines recommended for the child’s age.

Parents may be interested in vaccinating, yet still have questions. Some parents might just need additional information from you, the clinician they trust. Taking the time to answer their questions and address their concerns can help parents to accept a recommendation for HPV vaccination.

**WHEN PARENTS SAY:** Why does my child need the HPV vaccine?

**TRY SAYING:** HPV vaccine is important because it prevents cancer. That is why I recommend your daughter/son be vaccinated today.

**WHEN PARENTS SAY:** What diseases are caused by HPV?

**TRY SAYING:** Certain HPV types can cause cancer of the cervix, vagina, vulva, penis, anus and the throat. We can help prevent infection with the HPV types that cause these cancers by starting the HPV vaccine series for your child today.

**WHEN PARENTS SAY:** Is my child really at risk for HPV?

**TRY SAYING:** HPV is a very common widespread virus infecting both females and males. We can help protect your child by starting HPV vaccination today.

**WHEN PARENTS SAY:** Why do they need HPV vaccine at such a young age?

**TRY SAYING:** HPV vaccination works best when given between 11-12 years of age.

**WHEN PARENTS SAY:** I have some concerns about the safety of the vaccine — I keep reading things online that says HPV vaccination isn’t safe. Do you really know if it’s safe?

**TRY SAYING:** I know there are stories in the media and online about vaccines. However, I want you to know that HPV vaccine is very safe and has been carefully studied for many years. Vaccines, like any medication, may cause side effects. The HPV vaccination can cause pain, swelling, and/or redness where the shot is given, or possibly a headache.

**WHEN PARENTS SAY:** Could HPV vaccine cause my child to have problems with infertility?

**TRY SAYING:** There is no data available to suggest HPV vaccine will have an effect on future fertility. However, women who develop cervical cancer could require treatment, limiting their ability to have children.

**WHEN PARENTS SAY:** I’m just worried that my child will perceive this as a green light to have sex.

**TRY SAYING:** Numerous research studies have shown getting HPV vaccine does not make kids more likely to be sexually active or start having sex at a younger age.

**WHEN PARENTS SAY:** How do you know if the vaccine works?

**TRY SAYING:** Ongoing studies show HPV vaccination works very well and has decreased HPV infection, genital warts, and cervical precancers in young people.

**WHEN PARENTS SAY:** Why do boys need HPV vaccine?

**TRY SAYING:** HPV infection can cause cancers of the penis, anus, and throat and can cause genital warts. The vaccine can help prevent infection with the HPV types that cause these diseases.

**WHEN PARENTS SAY:** Would you get HPV vaccine for your kids?

**TRY SAYING:** Yes, I have given HPV vaccine to my child (or grandchild, etc.) because I believe in the importance of this cancer-preventing vaccine. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, cancer centers, and the CDC, agree getting the HPV vaccine is very important for your child.