You have the power to protect your kids from certain cancers.

HPV vaccine is important because it protects against cancers caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV vaccines are safe and highly effective in preventing infection from certain types of HPV when given before a person is exposed to the virus.

Parents are the key to protecting adolescents from HPV. Talk with your child’s healthcare provider about the HPV vaccine and make an appointment today.

42,700 people get cancer caused by HPV each year in the U.S.

HPV vaccine is cancer prevention.

Resources
- Washington State Department of Health: www.doh.wa.gov/hpv
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/hpv
- Family Health Hotline: 1-800-322-2588
- Washington State Local Health Departments and Districts: www.doh.wa.gov/localhealth

If you have a disability and need this document in another format, please call 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay).
Why does my child need the HPV vaccine at age 11–12?

Doctors and nurses recommend the vaccine for preteens of all genders at age 11 or 12, before they begin sexual activity. The HPV vaccine is most effective at this age because it produces the most infection-fighting cells, or antibodies, during the preteen years. Because it’s more effective at younger ages, teens who get immunized at age 15 or older will need more doses than those who get it at age 9 to 14.

Getting the vaccine at this age also ensures immunity is already in place well before they begin sexual activity later. However, if your teen hasn’t received the vaccine, it is not too late. Talk to their healthcare provider about getting them immunized as soon as possible.

What is HPV?

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a very common infection. It is spread easily by skin-to-skin contact, often during sexual activity. There are approximately 100 different types of HPV. Of those, at least 40 types can cause genital warts and several kinds of cancer, such as cancers of the tongue, tonsils, throat, cervix, vulva, vagina, anus, and penis.

Most people will be infected with at least one type of HPV at some point in their lives. About 14 million Americans become infected with HPV each year.

The good news is that most of these types of cancers can be prevented.

What is the HPV vaccine?

The HPV vaccine protects against the most common cancers caused by HPV. HPV vaccine also helps to prevent genital warts.

How can I protect my child from HPV diseases?

Make an appointment for HPV vaccine with your child’s healthcare provider.

• In Washington, HPV vaccine is provided at no cost for every child under age 19.
• Most health insurance plans cover it at no cost for those age 19 to 26.
• Need a doctor? Call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588.

Who should get the HPV vaccine and when?

CDC recommends everyone get HPV vaccine at age 11 or 12 years, though it can be given as early as 9 years. Catch-up vaccination can be given through age 26.

All recommended doses are needed for full protection.

• Ages 9 to 14 need 2 doses, 6 to 12 months apart.
• Ages 15 to 26 need 3 doses: doses 1 and 2 at 2 months apart, and doses 2 and 3 at 4 months apart.
• Anyone with a weak immune system needs the 3-dose schedule even if they’re under 15.

Why does my child need the HPV vaccine at age 11–12?

Doctors and nurses recommend the vaccine for preteens of all genders at age 11 or 12, before they begin sexual activity. The HPV vaccine is most effective at this age because it produces the most infection-fighting cells, or antibodies, during the preteen years.

Because it’s more effective at younger ages, teens who get immunized at age 15 or older will need more doses than those who get it at age 9 to 14.

Getting the vaccine at this age also ensures immunity is already in place well before they begin sexual activity later. However, if your teen hasn’t received the vaccine, it is not too late. Talk to their healthcare provider about getting them immunized as soon as possible.