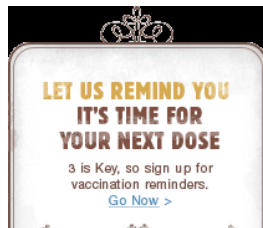


What is the HPV vaccine?

The only vaccine available right now is called **Gardasil**. It prevents four types of HPV: #16 and 18 (linked to cervical cancer) and #6 and 11 (which cause genital warts).

The vaccine works best in girls who have **not yet come in contact with HPV**. That's why the vaccine is given to 11-12 year old girls when they go in to the doctor for check-ups. It is also a good idea for women ages 13-26 who have not yet had the vaccine. The HPV vaccine is given in a series of **3 shots over 6 months**. The first shot is your choice. The second should be given two months later, and the third should be given about six months after the first one.



How does the HPV vaccine work?

All vaccines tend to take about 2 weeks to create an immune response in your body, which then protects you from the disease. **You cannot get HPV from the vaccine.**



****It is important to plan on returning to your doctor or nurse for your second and third shots. The vaccine will not work as well if you don't have all three doses of the vaccine.****

When is the best time to get the HPV vaccine?

The best time to get vaccinated is **before you come in contact with HPV**. Doctors think that all 11 and 12 year old girls should get it. Older girls can also get the vaccine; it is approved for all women ages 9-26.

Are there any side effects with the HPV vaccine?

Side effects are rare. But some girls who get the vaccine may complain of pain or redness where they got the shot (usually in their arm). In very few cases, people may get a fever, feel dizzy, or feel sick to their stomach.



Is there any reason NOT to get the HPV vaccine?

If you are pregnant it is suggested that you wait until after the end of the pregnancy. In general, there are very few reasons NOT to get this vaccine. If you aren't sure, ask your doctor if it's a good idea for you to get it.

****If you find out that you're pregnant after you get the first shot, tell your doctor or nurse. You will be told to wait to get the second or third shot until after your pregnancy is over.****



Should I get the HPV vaccine even if I've already had sex and don't know if I was exposed to HPV?

Yes. Girls and young women should receive the vaccine even if they have already had sex. **It is not necessary to have an HPV test before getting the vaccine.**

****Talk to your nurse or doctor to find out if you should have the vaccine. Remember, it is important to use condoms every time you have sex and to see your nurse or doctor for regular check-ups and Pap tests.****



If I get the HPV vaccine will I be safe from HPV for the rest of my life?

We don't know how long you'll be protected after you receive the HPV vaccine because it hasn't been available for very long. So far, research studies have followed girls for 5 years after they received the HPV vaccine and they are **still protected**. The levels of antibodies are very high, so protection is likely to last for a long time.

Is there an HPV vaccine for boys too?

The HPV vaccine is currently approved for young **women** between 9-26 years old. Scientific research is being done to show the benefits to boys and young men, who are also susceptible to HPV.

****Don't forget: the HPV vaccine protects you against some kinds of the virus, but it doesn't protect you from all of them. It is still very important to go for regular check-ups and Pap tests. Be sure that you always use condoms if you are sexually active. Talk to your nurse or doctor about whether the vaccine is right for you!****