

Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

#56 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers

HPV Vaccine Can *Prevent* Cervical Cancer

Why Girls and Young Women Should Be Vaccinated



• Available in Spanish and Chinese: call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health
• Disponible en español: llame al 311 o visite nyc.gov/health
• 需要中文服務 - 可電 311 或造訪網址: nyc.gov/health



Prevent cervical cancer

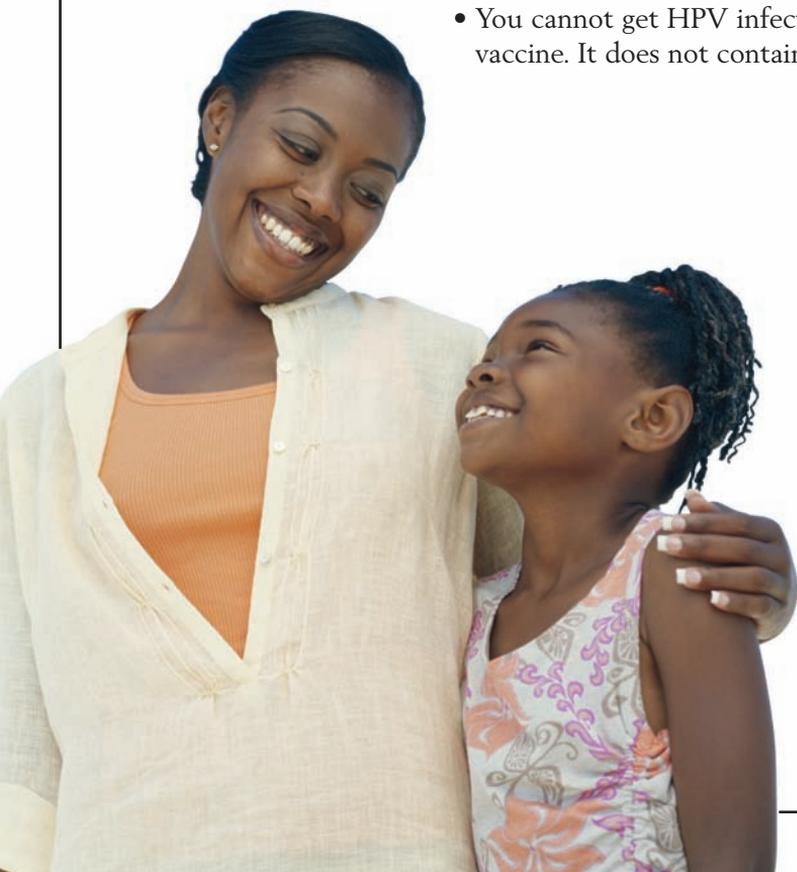
- Get vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV) to prevent most cervical cancer.
 - There are many types of HPV. Getting vaccinated protects against the types that cause most cervical cancer.
 - It does NOT treat existing HPV infections, genital warts or cancers.
- HPV vaccine is a series of three shots given over 6 months. Women need the full series to be protected.
- Men can also get HPV infection, but HPV vaccine is currently licensed only for women.

HPV is common

- HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States.
 - Most sexually active people get it at some time in their lives.
 - Most HPV infections don't cause symptoms and go away on their own.
- Long-term HPV infection can sometimes cause cervical cancer.
- It can also cause genital warts and some less-common types of cancer in both men and women.

HPV vaccine is safe and effective

- HPV vaccine has been thoroughly tested. It is more than 90% effective against the types of HPV that cause most cervical cancer and most genital warts. It has not been found to cause serious adverse effects.
- HPV vaccine (like any vaccine) can cause temporary reactions, such as slight discomfort at the injection site or a mild fever.
 - You cannot get HPV infection from the vaccine. It does not contain HPV virus.



Who should get HPV vaccine

All girls ages 11 and 12.

- Girls should get HPV vaccine *before* they become sexually active. They will get its full benefit if they have not yet been exposed to HPV.
- Doctors may give the vaccine to girls as young as age 9.



Girls and women ages 13 to 26 who did not receive it when they were younger.

- Women who are sexually active may also benefit from the vaccine. Most new HPV infections are among people ages 15 to 24.
- If a woman gets vaccinated after she has already become infected with one of the types of HPV covered by the vaccine, it will not prevent disease from that type. But it will still protect against *other* types.
- Getting an HPV test *before* you get vaccinated isn't recommended because the test doesn't tell the exact type a person has.

Who should NOT be vaccinated

Anyone who has ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to yeast, or to a previous dose of HPV vaccine should not be vaccinated. Tell the person giving the vaccine if you have any severe allergies.



Who should delay vaccination

- HPV vaccine appears to be safe for both the mother and unborn baby.
 - As a precaution, women should complete their pregnancy before getting HPV vaccine.
 - If a woman finds out she is pregnant after starting the vaccine series, she should complete her pregnancy before finishing all three doses.
 - Women who are breastfeeding may safely get the vaccine.
- Women with a mild illness, such as a cold, can still get HPV vaccine. Women with more severe illness should wait until they recover.

Where to get HPV vaccine

- Call your regular doctor to see if the vaccine is available.
- Free or reduced-cost HPV vaccine is available for women and girls 26 or younger at NYC public clinics. Call 311 for more information, including hours and locations.

Other ways to reduce your risk of HPV

- Not having sex is the surest way to prevent HPV.
 - Sexually active adults can reduce their risk by being in a mutually faithful relationship, or by limiting their number of sex partners.
 - But someone with only one lifetime sex partner can still get HPV, if his or her partner is infected.
- Condoms can protect against HPV infection.
 - Areas not covered by a condom can be exposed to HPV.
 - Condoms also protect against HIV and many other sexually transmitted infections – when used all the time and the right way.
- For more information on condoms, call 311 and ask for **Condoms** or visit nycondoms.org. Or see **Health Bulletin #47: NYC Condoms – Get Some.**





Pap tests still matter.

- HPV vaccine prevents most cervical cancer but it doesn't entirely eliminate risk.
- Regular Pap tests and follow-up screening can prevent most cervical cancer – or detect it at an early, curable stage.
- Women need regular Pap tests even after receiving HPV vaccine.
- For more information on cervical cancer screening, call 311 and ask for Pap tests. Or see **Health Bulletin #41: Pap Tests Save Lives – Get Checked for Cervical Cancer.**

More Information

- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:
nyc.gov/health or call 311 and ask for HPV vaccine
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
www.cdc.gov/std/hpv
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration:
www.fda.gov/womens/getthefacts/hpv.html
- National Cancer Institute:
www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/risk/hpv
- Planned Parenthood:
www.plannedparenthood.org/sexual-health/std/hpv.htm
- Merck & Co.:
www.hpvinfos.com or www.gardasil.com
- American Cancer Society:
www.cancer.org

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311**

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