

New Jersey Catholic Conference

149 North Warren Street · Trenton, New Jersey 08608
(609) 989-1120 · Fax (609) 989-1152
E-mail: info@njcathconf.com
Web: www.njcathconf.com

Patrick R. Brannigan
Executive Director

Position on HPV Vaccination and Parental Responsibility

- The immunization of young females with the HPV (human papilloma virus) vaccine as a protection against cervical cancer poses no inherent moral objection. Rather, from a Catholic perspective, the HPV vaccine can be viewed as a responsible and acceptable measure for preventing cervical cancer.
- Consonant with parental and guardian obligations toward good medical decisions regarding minor children, parents and legal guardians enjoy the rights to assess the necessity and appropriateness of HPV vaccine for their daughters. This right should be exercised after seeking competent medical advice. This right is currently respected by statute.
- The enclosed Fact Sheet has been distributed by the State of New Jersey to all administrators. Please note that the immunization is recommended, NOT mandated.
- Because parents are the primary educators and care-givers for their children, they are obliged to instruct their children and to model for their children responsible civic and moral behavior. The HPV vaccine is not a panacea for preventing all strains of HPV infection. Therefore, parental responsibility for the moral and spiritual formation of their children in the virtue of chastity is indispensable. Chastity before marriage and fidelity within marriage serves as the best defense against such infections.
- HPV is categorized as a behaviorally transmitted communicable disease and not a contagious disease. As such, advocacy for a public policy to mandate universal school-based vaccinations is not supported as appropriate by the New Jersey Catholic Conference.
- The ability to pay for the HPV vaccine should not be the determining factor for such immunization. Access to the vaccine should be made available to those children who are uninsured or are without the means to pay for immunizations.

HPV Vaccine

Questions and Answers for Parents



The Advisory Council on Immunization Practices (ACIP) along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend HPV vaccination for 11-12 year-old girls.

What is human papillomavirus (HPV)?

HPV is a common virus that is passed from person to person through oral sex, anal sex or penile-vaginal sex. There are about 40 types of HPV. HPV is the major cause of cervical cancer in women. Some types can cause warts in the genital areas.

How common is HPV?

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States. At least half of sexually active people will get HPV at some time in their lives. Every year in the United States, about 6.2 million people get HPV. HPV is most common in people who are in their late teens and early 20's. Most people who have HPV show no signs or symptoms.

How common is cervical cancer?

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2007, over 11,000 women will be diagnosed with cervical cancer and approximately 3,600 women will die from this disease.

What is the HPV vaccine?

The HPV vaccine is the first vaccine developed and licensed to prevent cervical cancer, genital warts and other diseases caused by HPV.

How is the HPV vaccine given?

The vaccine is given in three doses over 6 months.



- 1st dose: Now—or at a date you, your daughter and daughter's healthcare provider choose
- 2nd dose: 2 months after 1st dose
- 3rd dose: 6 months after 1st dose

The HPV vaccine can be given at the same time as other vaccines.

Who should get the HPV vaccine?

The ACIP and the CDC recommend the HPV vaccine for all 11-12 year old girls, though vaccination can begin at age nine. The vaccine is also recommended for 13-26 year old girls/women who have not yet received the vaccine or completed the full series of shots.

Is there anyone who should not get the HPV vaccine?



People who have had a severe allergic reaction to yeast or any other component of HPV vaccine, or to an earlier dose of HPV vaccine should not get the HPV vaccine. People who are ill should wait until they recover before getting the vaccine. Pregnant girls/women should not get the vaccine. If a girl/woman finds out that she is pregnant after she has started the vaccine series, she should wait until she completes her pregnancy before finishing the vaccine series. The HPV vaccine is not recommended for boys.

Why is the HPV vaccine recommended for such young girls?

It is important for girls to get HPV vaccine before they become sexually active. The vaccine is most effective for girls/women who get vaccinated before their first sexual contact. It does not work as well for those who were exposed to the virus before getting the vaccine. However, most women will still benefit from getting the vaccine because they will be protected against other virus types contained in the vaccine.

Continued →



How effective is the HPV vaccine?

This vaccine is effective in preventing four types of HPV that cause up to 70% of all cervical cancers and about 90% of genital warts. However, the vaccine will not treat existing HPV infections or complications.

Is the HPV vaccine safe?



The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has licensed the vaccine as safe and effective. This vaccine has been tested in thousands of females (nine to 26 years of age) around the world. These studies have shown no serious side effects. The most common side effect is brief soreness at the injection site.

How long does the HPV vaccine protection last?

Studies show that the vaccine provides protection for at least five years. More research is being done to find out how long protection will last.

What about vaccinating males?

It is not yet known if the vaccine is effective in boys or men. Studies are now being done to find out if the vaccine works to prevent HPV infection and disease in males. When more information is available, this vaccine may be licensed and recommended for boys/men as well.

Will my daughter be required to get vaccinated before she attends school?

While HPV vaccination is not required, the NJDHSS strongly supports the CDC recommendation that all girls 11-12 years of age be vaccinated for HPV.

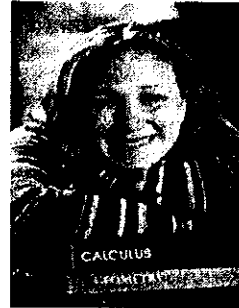
What is the cost of the HPV vaccine?

The vaccine may cost \$120 per dose (\$360 for full series). However, cost may vary.

Is the HPV vaccine covered by insurance?

Most insurance plans and managed care plans cover the cost of recommended vaccines. However, while some insurance companies may cover the vaccine, others may not. Check with your insurance provider to be certain that the HPV vaccine is covered.

How can my family get the vaccine if we don't have insurance and cannot pay for it?



The Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program helps families of children who may not otherwise have access to vaccines by providing free vaccines to doctors who serve them. The VFC program is a national program, and New Jersey has providers and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) that offer free or low cost vaccines for

children without health coverage for vaccines. For more information, call the NJDHSS Vaccines for Children Program at (609) 588-7512.

Where can I get more information?

- New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services website: www.nj.gov/health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: www.cdc.gov/std/hpv or www.cdc.gov/nip
- CDC HPV Vaccination Information Page: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/
- Childhood immunization schedule: www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/child-schedule.htm
- Adult immunization schedule: www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/adult-schedule.htm
- CDC-INFO Contact Center at:
English and Spanish
(800) CDC-INFO
(800) 232-4636
TTY: (888) 232-6348
FAX: (770) 488-4760

For more information about the HPV Vaccine or other vaccines for children, call the New Jersey Vaccines for Children Program:

(609) 588-7512