

# Answering Questions About HPV Vaccine: A Guide for Dental Professionals



## Make a strong recommendation.

Ask parents if their child has completed the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine series. Let them know that you strongly support giving the HPV vaccine to children 11 - 12 years of age to protect them from HPV-associated cancers.

## Be ready to accurately answer parents' questions.

Usually, letting parents know that HPV causes oropharyngeal cancer (a form of throat cancer) is enough. If a parent needs more information be ready to address their questions and help them understand why you recommend the HPV vaccine. Suggest families contact their pediatrician for more information and access facts about the HPV vaccine from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help you with the conversation: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/hpv/public/index.html>



Almost everyone will be infected with HPV at some point in their lives.

Below are some things that parents might say and tips on how to respond.

## HPV VACCINE IS IMPORTANT

### Is my child at risk for HPV?

- Almost everyone will be infected at some time in their lives. Your pediatrician can help protect your child from the cancers caused by the virus by completing the HPV vaccine series before age 13.

### Why is HPV vaccination recommended at ages 11 or 12?

- The immune system of a young adolescent responds better than an older adolescent.

### Would you give HPV vaccine to your kids?

- Protecting children, including my own, from HPV is very important. This vaccine is able to protect them from HPV-related cancers.

## HPV VACCINE IS EFFECTIVE

### How do you know if the vaccine works?

- Ongoing studies show that HPV vaccination works very well. Since becoming available in 2006, this vaccine already has decreased HPV infection, genital warts, and precancers of the cervix in young people.

### Why do boys need HPV vaccine?

- In men, HPV infection can cause cancers of the throat as well as the penis and anus. By vaccinating your son as recommended, he will be better protected against the HPV types that can cause these diseases.

## HPV VACCINE IS SAFE

### Is HPV vaccination safe?

- The HPV vaccine is very safe. More than 80 million doses have been given in the US and it has been studied for more than ten years by medical and scientific experts. This vaccine is able to protect them from HPV-related cancers.

### What are the possible vaccine side effects?

- HPV vaccine, like any vaccine, can cause injection site pain, swelling, or redness. Some adolescents may have a headache or even faint after they get shots. Fainting may lead to injury if the child falls, so offices typically have patients stay seated for a while after receiving the shot.

By ensuring that patients 11 or 12 years old get the HPV vaccine, we can give them a chance at a future free from HPV-associated cancers.

**HPV YOU ARE THE KEY TO  
CANCER PREVENTION**

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