



How Important is HPV Vaccine for Preteens and Teens? Ask Kristen's Dad.

Our daughter Kristen enjoyed a normal, happy childhood. She was a good student, played rugby, cello and guitar. Her life was filled with promise. She graduated from college with a successful career path before her. Then tragedy struck. She was diagnosed with cervical cancer. Eleven months later she died at the age of 23.

You try to protect your children. You remember the good times. You cherish the memories. You pray it never happens again. It doesn't have to happen. Cervical cancer has one main cause: HPV. That makes it almost 100% preventable. The HPV vaccine could have saved Kristen's life. Protect your children. Vaccinate them.

–Kristen's Dad

Kristen passed away from cervical cancer, a cancer caused by human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a very common virus that spreads by sexual contact. More than half of men and women will get infected with HPV at some point in their life, but most won't know when they have it.

HPV infections can cause cervical cancer in women and penile cancer in men. HPV can also cause throat and mouth cancer, anal cancer, and genital warts in both men and women.

But, you can help **protect** your child from these cancers with the HPV vaccine.

When should my child get vaccinated?

The HPV vaccine is recommended for preteen girls and boys at age 11 or 12. If your older child hasn't gotten the vaccine yet, talk to their doctor about getting it now. It's not too late.

It takes 6 months to complete the 3-dose HPV vaccine series. Schedule your child's 2nd and 3rd shots before leaving the clinic:

HPV Shot #1	_____
	(Today's date)
HPV Shot #2	_____
	(1-2 months after #1)
HPV Shot #3	_____
	(4 months after #2)

Your child needs all 3 shots for full protection!

Why is the HPV vaccine given at such an early age?

It's recommended at ages 11 or 12, because it works best **before** infection with the virus and well before having sex. The vaccine prevents HPV. It does not cure it. Studies also show that the body's immune system responds more strongly to the vaccine at age 11 or 12 than later. That's why it's better not to wait.

What are the two different HPV vaccines?

- Gardasil® is for boys and girls. It is approved to protect against genital warts and cervical, vaginal, vulvar, and anal cancers.
- Cervarix® is only for girls and approved to protect against cervical cancer.

Both HPV vaccines may also help prevent cancer of the penis, mouth and throat.

Are HPV vaccines safe?

HPV vaccines are very safe. Millions of people worldwide have already received HPV vaccines. When side effects occur, they are normally mild, such as pain, redness, or swelling in the arm where people get the shot. Less common effects can be fever, an allergic reaction, a headache, or fainting.

Some preteens and teens may faint after any medical procedure, including receiving vaccines. Talk to your doctor about observing your child seated or lying down after they get a shot for about 15 minutes.

Serious side effects from the HPV vaccine are rare. It is important to tell the doctor or nurse if your child has any severe allergies, including an allergy to latex or yeast.

How effective are HPV vaccines?

Both vaccines are very effective in preventing common types of HPV that can lead to cancer.

Rates of these common HPV infections have greatly dropped in countries where HPV vaccines are given.

Do women still need Pap tests after getting the HPV vaccine?

Yes. Every woman needs routine Pap tests starting at age 21, because the vaccines don't protect against every type of HPV.

Where can I learn more?

For more information about HPV vaccines, talk with your child's doctor or nurse. You can also visit: [cdc.gov/vaccines/teens](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens).



"I decided to vaccinate my son against HPV, because the vaccine can prevent boys from spreading the virus and help prevent genital warts and some cancers." — Patrice