



CDC Recommends Two HPV Shots for Younger Adolescents

CDC now routinely recommends two doses of HPV vaccine for 11 or 12 year olds to prevent HPV cancers. This recommendation makes it easier for parents to protect their children by reducing the number of shots and trips to the doctor. HPV vaccination is an important cancer prevention tool and two doses of HPV vaccine will provide safe, effective and long-lasting protection when given at the recommended ages of 11 and 12 years. Some of the specifics of the recommendation include:

- The first HPV vaccine dose is routinely recommended at 11-12 years old. The second dose of the vaccine should be administered 6 to 12 months after the first dose.
- Teens and young adults who start the series at ages 15 through 26 years will continue to need three doses of HPV vaccine to protect against cancer-causing HPV infections.
- Adolescents aged 9 through 14 years who have already received two doses of HPV vaccine less than 5 months apart, will require a third dose.
- Three doses are recommended for people with weakened immune systems aged 9-26 years.

Talking to Patients and Their Parents about HPV Vaccination and Reduced Dosing

With patients aged 11-12 years, start the vaccine discussion with their parents by making the following recommendation: “Now that your child is 11 (or 12) years old, they are due for three vaccines today to help protect them from meningitis, HPV cancers, and pertussis—or whooping cough.”

Many parents are accepting of this bundled recommendation because it demonstrates that HPV vaccination is a normal part of adolescent vaccination. Parents may be interested in vaccinating, yet still have questions. Some parents might just need additional information from you, the clinician they trust. Clarify what the parent’s question is or what additional information they need.

For parents who have a question or need more information about “why now/why 11-12?” you can tell parents:

“Like with all vaccine-preventable diseases, we want to protect your child early. If we start now, it’s one less thing for you to worry about. Also, your child will only need two doses of HPV vaccine at this age. If you wait, your child may need three doses in order to get complete protection.

We’ll give the first shot today and then you’ll need to bring your child back in 6 to 12 months from now for the second dose.”

If a parent has a question or needs more information about “How long can we wait and still give just two doses?” you can say:

“The two-dose schedule is recommended if the series is started before the 15th birthday. However, I don’t recommend waiting to give this cancer-preventing vaccine. As children get older and have busier schedules, it becomes more difficult to get them back in. I’d feel best if we started the series today to get them protected as soon as possible.”

For patients aged 9-14 who have already had two doses given less than 5 months apart, you can tell parents:

“The recommended schedule is 2 doses, 6 to 12 months apart. The minimum interval between doses is 5 months. Because your child received two doses less than five months apart, we’ll need to give your child a third dose.”

For parents who ask about the duration of protection or how well the vaccine will work with just two doses, you can say:

“Studies have shown that 2-doses of HPV vaccine work very well in younger adolescents and we expect the same long-lasting protection with 2 doses that we expect with 3 doses.”

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