



Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Vaccine

PATIENT EDUCATION SERIES

What is HPV?

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is a viral skin disease. There are approximately 100 types of HPV. Some HPV types only infect the genital area and may cause warts, some cause mild changes in cervical cells that do not turn into cancer, and some cause changes that may become cervical cancer if present for many years. In adults, the disorder is considered a sexually transmitted infection, passed from person to person through intimate contact. Infection with HPV is very common, although the majority of people have no symptoms (asymptomatic). In several studies done on college women, nearly half were positive for HPV, although only 1 to 2% had visible warts and less than 10% had ever had any visible genital warts.

What are cervical cancer, precancerous lesions, and genital warts?

Cervical cancer is a serious disease that can be life-threatening. This disease is caused by certain HPV types that can cause the cells in the lining of the cervix to change from normal to precancerous lesions. If these are not treated, they can turn cancerous. Genital warts are caused by certain types of HPV and often appear as skin-colored growths and are found on the inside or outside of the genitals. They can hurt, itch, bleed, or cause discomfort. Topical and surgical treatments are available for the treatment of warts.

What is the HPV vaccine and how is it given?

The vaccine for HPV, called GARDASIL, protects against 4 types of HPV (types 6, 11, 16, 18) that are linked to 70% of cervical cancers and 90% of genital warts. It is *not* used to treat HPV. GARDASIL is given as a 3 dose injection. The second dose is given 2 months after the first injection and the third dose is given 6 months after the first injection. You are able to receive all 3 injections in the series at University Health Services, even if you have started the series with a different medical provider. You must receive all 3 doses to get the full benefits of the vaccine. If you miss a dose, your medical provider will decide when to give the missed dose.

Who should not receive GARDASIL?

GARDASIL is approved for females ages 9 through 26 years. You should not receive GARDASIL if you:

- ◆ are pregnant
- ◆ have already been exposed to the four types of HPV which the vaccine prevents
- ◆ have had an allergic reaction after getting any GARDASIL doses
- ◆ are allergic to any of the ingredients in the vaccine (purified inactive proteins that come from HPV types 6, 11, 16, and 18, amorphous aluminum hydroxyphosphate, sulfate, sodium chloride, L histidine, polysorbate 80, sodium borate, and water).

Although it may be effective for women older than 26 years and for men, it is not yet approved for these groups.

Will GARDASIL help me if I have already had HPV in the past?

Even if you have been infected with HPV in the past, you may still benefit from the vaccine. Although HPV is common among sexually active people, most are not infected with all four types of HPV that the vaccination prevents. In clinical trials, individuals with current or past infections with one or more vaccine-related HPV types prior to vaccination were protected from disease caused by the remaining vaccine-related HPV types

What are the possible side effects of GARDASIL?

As with all vaccines, there is a possibility of side effects with GARDASIL. Although it has been shown to be generally well tolerated, the most commonly reported side effects included:

- ◆ pain, swelling, itching, and redness at the injection site
- ◆ fever

What should I tell my medical provider before I am vaccinated with GARDASIL?

It is important to tell your medical provider if you:

- ◆ have had an allergic reaction to the vaccine
- ◆ have had a bleeding disorder and cannot receive injections in the arm
- ◆ have a weakened immune system
- ◆ are pregnant or planning to become pregnant
- ◆ have any illness with a fever of more than 100°F
- ◆ take or plan to take any medicines, even over the counter medicines.

Do I still need to have a yearly GYN exam if I receive GARDASIL?

You still need to have an annual GYN exam if you have had the vaccine. GARDASIL does not substitute for routine cervical cancer screening. Remember, the vaccine does not protect against all of the HPV types that are linked with cervical cancer, nor does it protect against other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Therefore, safer sex protection, such as the use of condoms and dental dams, is still recommended. Additionally, a yearly GYN exam is an opportunity to maintain your overall reproductive health. As with all vaccines, GARDASIL may not fully protect everyone who gets the vaccine.