

HPV and You

What to know about the virus and the vaccine

THE BIG IDEA

Getting the HPV vaccine now helps protect your future health.

WHAT IS HPV

A really common virus

- HPV stands for human papillomavirus.
- Most people will have HPV at some point in their life.
- Most of the time, the body clears it on its own.
- Some kinds of HPV can cause cancer later in life.

HOW MANY SHOTS

Two or three, based on age

- If you are 14 or younger: two shots, a few months apart.
- If you are 15 to 17: three shots over six months.
- The clinic will tell you when to come back for the next one.

WHY GET THE VACCINE

It helps prevent cancer

- The HPV vaccine helps prevent some kinds of cancer.
- It works best when you get it before you are around HPV at all.
- That is why doctors give it to kids and teens.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

You can ask questions

- You can ask your doctor or nurse any question. There is no bad question.
- You can ask to talk to your doctor alone if you want to.
- If something feels off, tell a trusted adult or your care team.

IS IT SAFE? DOES IT HURT?

Yes, safe. Yes, a quick pinch.

- The vaccine has been studied for more than 15 years. It is safe.
- The shot might sting for a second. Like any shot.
- Your arm might feel sore for a day. That is normal.
- Serious side effects are very rare.

GOOD THINGS TO ASK

Try these at your visit

- When will I come back for the next shot?
- What should I do if my arm hurts after?
- Is there anything I should not do after the shot?

SOURCES & EVIDENCE

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. HPV Vaccine Recommendations. [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), 2025.
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- American Academy of Pediatrics. HPV Vaccine. [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org), 2025.
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