

## Update on HPV Vaccine Recommendations for Pre-teens

[Announcer] *This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.*

[Rob Dalton] As children enter their pre-teen years, there are now vaccines they can get to protect them from potentially serious diseases. One of these vaccines is the HPV vaccine, which protects girls from cervical cancer and both boys *and* girls from genital warts. The first vaccine was licensed in 2006, and a second one just recently, in the fall of 2009. Dr. Melinda Wharton, Deputy Director for the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the CDC, is here to tell us more about the two HPV vaccines. Dr. Melinda Wharton, thank you for joining us.

[Dr. Wharton] Thank you.

[Rob Dalton] So tell us, to begin with, why are HPV vaccines needed?

[Dr. Wharton] Human papillomavirus, or HPV, is a common virus that's easily spread by skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity. Some types of these viruses cause cervical cancer and other less common cancers, and other types of HPV cause genital warts. HPV vaccines can prevent these health problems. Because most people who are infected with HPV don't have any symptoms, it's possible to unknowingly spread HPV to another person.

[Rob Dalton] So, how common *are* the health problems caused by HPV?

[Dr. Wharton] HPV is the main cause of cervical cancer in women. There's about 11,000 new cases of cervical cancer each year in the United States and about 4,000 deaths in women each year in this country, due to cervical cancer. At any given time, about one in a hundred sexually active adults in the United States have genital warts, so this is really pretty common.

[Rob Dalton] Dr. Wharton, what HPV vaccines are available in the U.S.?

[Dr. Wharton] There are two brands of HPV vaccine licensed by the FDA in the United States that we recommend here at CDC. These two vaccines are Cervarix and Gardasil. Gardasil was licensed in 2006 and Cervarix was licensed in 2009.

[Rob Dalton] So, how are the two vaccines actually similar?

[Dr. Wharton] Both vaccines are *very* effective against the HPV types that cause most cervical cancers. So both vaccines prevent cervical cancer and the precancerous condition that precede it, in women. Both vaccines are very safe. And both vaccines cannot cause infection with HPV. Finally, both vaccines are given as shots and require three doses.

[Rob Dalton] What differences are there?

[Dr. Wharton] Only Gardasil protects against the HPV types that cause most genital warts in males and females. The vaccines also have different adjuvants, which are substances that are added to vaccines to increase the body's immune response.

[Rob Dalton] Dr. Wharton, who should get the HPV vaccine?

[Dr. Wharton] Cervarix and Gardasil are both licensed, safe, and effective for females. CDC recommends that *all* girls who are 11 to 12 years old get three doses of *either* brand of HPV vaccine to protect against cervical cancer and its precursors. Girls and young women ages 13 through 26 should get all three doses of an HPV vaccine if they haven't yet done so. For protection against genital warts as well, girls or women may choose to get Gardasil. Gardasil is also licensed, safe, and effective for males. Boys and young men may choose to get this vaccine to prevent genital warts.

[Rob Dalton] So, tell us, why is HPV vaccine recommended at ages 11 or 12 years?

[Dr. Wharton] The HPV vaccine *only* provides protection if it's given before infection. Someone can be infected with HPV the very first time they have sexual contact with another person. So we give these vaccines at these ages because this is before young people generally become sexually active.

[Rob Dalton] So, Dr. Wharton, why is Gardasil *not* on the CDC immunization sheet for boys and men?

[Dr. Wharton] CDC did not add this vaccine to the recommended immunization schedules for males in these age groups because studies suggested that the *best* way to prevent the *most* disease due to HPV is to vaccinate as many girls and women as possible. Parents of boys can decide if Gardasil is right for their sons by talking with their sons' health care providers. Young men can also discuss this vaccine with their doctors.

[Rob Dalton] And can you tell us, how safe are the HPV vaccines?

[Dr. Wharton] FDA has licensed the vaccines as safe and effective. Both vaccines were tested in thousands of people around the world and no serious side effects due to the vaccine were found. As with *all* vaccines, CDC and FDA continue to monitor the safety of these vaccines very carefully.

[Rob Dalton] Dr. Wharton, thank you for joining us.

[Dr. Wharton] My pleasure. Thank you.

[Rob Dalton] For more information, you can visit [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines) or simply call 1-800-CDC-INFO. I'm Rob Dalton.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.