

PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

HPV Protection

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HPV, also known as the human papilloma virus, is a sexually transmitted virus that can cause different types of cancers including cervical, oral and anal cancer. There are certain virus strains strongly linked to cancer. Those strains are 16 and 18. Other strains are linked to anogenital warts and lung disease. It can be transmitted by contact with skin, usually during sex.

WHAT DOES THE HPV VACCINE PROTECT AGAINST?

We have now developed a vaccine that protects against the high-risk strains that are linked to cancer. Depending on the vaccine, it can protect anywhere from two to nine strains. All vaccines protect against strains 16 and 18. Generally you will need two doses of the vaccine 6-12 months apart.

WHO SHOULD GET?

Both males and female can get the HPV vaccine.

WHAT AGE?

The ideal age to receive the vaccine is between 11-12 but can be started as early as 9 years old and also be given between the ages of 13-26. Ideally, it is to be started before having sex and there has been no prior exposure to HPV. However, being sexually active does not preclude getting the vaccination.

REACTIONS

Like other vaccines, there can be injection site reactions, pain, dizziness and nausea. Unlike other vaccines there are a significant number of post vaccine fainting episodes. Therefore, it is recommended that your child wait in the clinic for 15 minutes either sitting or lying down.

EFFECTIVENESS

Studies have shown that the vaccine is effective, producing a good antibody response in patients. It is most effective in people who have not been exposed to HPV in the past.