

New Campaign Aims to Increase HPV Vaccination During Pandemic

Coronavirus threatens to slow progress against cancer prevention

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In an effort to boost public health and help keep vaccinations on track in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, the American Cancer Society is renewing [Mission: HPV Cancer Free](#), a campaign to eliminate HPV cancers as a public health problem, starting with cervical cancer.

The ongoing pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for healthcare providers, patients, and policymakers. One outcome from the past few months is dramatic declines in vaccination. [A recent study](#) showed a 71% drop in healthcare visits for 7-17-year-olds, ages when critical vaccines like Tdap, HPV, and meningitis are given. These declines put children and communities at greater risk for outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

HPV or human papillomavirus is a common virus that can cause six types of cancer. About 14 million people in the United States become infected with HPV each year. Eight out of ten people will get HPV at some point in their lifetime. Most infections become undetectable, but some can go on to cause cancer. HPV infection has no treatment, but a vaccine can prevent it.

“HPV vaccination offers the very rare opportunity to help prevent not just one but six types of cancer. Just two doses of this vaccine, given to kids at age 9-12, can prevent over 90% of HPV cancers,” said Debbie Saslow, PhD., managing director, HPV & GYN Cancers for the American Cancer Society.

HPV vaccination works best when given between ages 9 and 12. Vaccination at the recommended ages will prevent more cancers than vaccination at older ages. Children and young adults age 13 through 26 who have not been vaccinated, or who haven’t gotten all their doses, should get the vaccine as soon as possible. Both boys and girls can get infected with HPV. HPV vaccination helps protect boys from cancers of the throat, penis, and anus later in life. HPV vaccination helps protect girls from cancers of the cervix, throat, vagina, vulva, and anus later in life

The goal of Mission: HPV Cancer Free is to reach a vaccination rate of 80% of 13-year-olds in the United States by 2026.

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