

# Myths and Facts

## about HPV Vaccines

**FACT: HPV vaccines aren't just for girls.**

Males are also at risk for HPV and related diseases, such as genital warts, so it's a myth that the vaccines are just for girls—boys and young men need to be vaccinated too.

**FACT: Teens who are vaccinated against HPV will not become promiscuous.**

Some people think that getting young people vaccinated against HPV encourages them toward sex. Not true! Several studies have shown that vaccination does not lead to increased sexual behavior. While many studies relied upon self-reported behavior about sexual activity, a 2012 study published in the journal *Pediatrics* instead looked at medical data, including pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection testing or diagnosis, and contraceptive counseling as evidence of sexually activity. The researchers found that HPV vaccination in the recommended ages was NOT associated with increased sexual activity.

**FACT: HPV vaccines are safe.**

HPV vaccines have been used in many countries around the world for several years, and have proven to be safe and well tolerated. The most common reported side effect is pain, redness, and swelling around where the shot was given. Other mild reactions reported include fever, headache, fatigue, fainting, nausea and vomiting. As with any vaccine or medication, there is always a possible of a serious problem, such allergic reaction. However, such reactions are rare and HPV vaccines continue to be monitored for any safety concerns.

**FACT: Women who get vaccinated against HPV still need to have Pap tests.**

HPV vaccines can protect against the HPV types found with most cases of cervical cancer, but there are other high-risk types the vaccines don't cover. Even if a woman has been vaccinated against HPV, regular screening—with Pap and HPV tests—is still necessary. Pap and HPV tests save lives!

Don't fall for the myths—get the FACTS.  
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