

What should you do if your daughter has a reaction to HPV vaccine?

For pain or swelling where the injection was given, apply a cool moist towel to the area for about 15 minutes. Repeat as necessary.

Use acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) if your daughter has pain or fever.

Note: ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) is not recommended for individuals younger than 18 years of age because of the increased risk of Reye's Syndrome.

If you have any questions or if your daughter has an unusual reaction to the vaccine, call:

HealthLink Alberta at

- 943-LINK (5465) in Calgary,
- 408-LINK (5465) in Edmonton,
- toll- free elsewhere in the province at 1-866-408-LINK (5465), or
- your local public health office.

Your daughter should not get the vaccine if she has had a severe reaction (anaphylaxis) to this vaccine in the past.

Can my older daughter, who has already completed grade five, receive HPV vaccine as well?

The publicly-funded Alberta HPV Immunization Program is for girls in grade five. In addition girls in grade nine will be offered the vaccine in 2009-2010 to 2011-2012. The HPV vaccine is licensed for girls and women nine to 26 years of age. Please discuss the HPV vaccine with a public health nurse or your doctor if you have older daughters and wish to purchase the vaccine for them.

Will the vaccine replace cervical cancer screening (Pap tests) in the future?

No, cervical cancer screening is still recommended for women including those who have received the HPV vaccine. Not all types of cervical cancer are caused by the HPV types represented in the vaccine. Cervical cancer screening will continue to be important in the early detection of pre-cancerous and cancerous changes to the cervix.

For more information

Call your local public health office.



www.health.alberta.ca

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Human Papillomavirus Vaccine

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Important information about this vaccine

Alberta

What is human papillomavirus infection?

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the name of a family of viruses that can cause cervical cancer and skin and genital warts.

HPV infection is a very common infection spread through sexual contact. Seven out of ten women can expect to be infected with HPV over their life-time. HPV causes about 99% of cervical cancers.

Some HPV infections can lead to changes in the cells of the cervix and cervical cancer. Each year in Alberta, 180 cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed and about 40 women with the disease die.

What are the symptoms of HPV?

Most HPV infections do not cause symptoms and usually go away by themselves. It may take one to two years for the infection to disappear. However, some HPV infections do not go away and can lead to cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is detected by cervical cancer screening with a Pap test.

Will HPV vaccine prevent cervical cancer?

Yes, HPV vaccine prevents cervical cancer. It provides protection against four types of HPV virus:

- types 16 and 18 cause about 70% of cervical cancers
- types 6 and 11 cause about 90% of genital warts

Who should receive HPV vaccine?

HPV immunization is offered free of charge to all girls in grade five. In 2009-2010 to 2011-2012 it will be offered to girls in grade 9.

The vaccine is given at school as a series of three doses over a six-month period. It is administered at the same time as hepatitis B vaccine that is routinely offered to all grade five students in Alberta.

Parental or guardian consent is required before the vaccine can be administered to your daughter at school.

Recent studies have indicated that the HPV vaccine provides good protection for at least five years after immunization. Studies are ongoing to determine if protection will be lifetime or if booster doses will be needed in the future to ensure long-term protection.

At this time, HPV vaccine is only licensed for girls.

How effective is the vaccine?

The HPV vaccine is highly effective in preventing four types of HPV infection. In studies, highest immune responses were seen in younger girls between nine and 14 years of age.

Is HPV vaccine safe?

Yes, the vaccine is safe and it cannot cause HPV infection because it is made from killed viruses. In Canada, each new vaccine undergoes laboratory and field-testing and must pass a rigorous licensing procedure with the federal government before it is introduced. Once a vaccine is approved, every lot is tested for safety and quality. In addition, all reported side effects are monitored to ensure continued safety of the vaccine.

What are the side effects of HPV vaccine?

Some people may have mild side effects such as pain, redness, itchiness and swelling at the place where the needle was given. Less commonly, a slight fever, nausea, dizziness, headache or vomiting may occur.

Side effects are usually mild to moderate and only last for a day or two.

Fainting has infrequently been reported following HPV immunization. Fainting also occurs infrequently with other vaccines particularly when they are given to adolescents.

As with any vaccine, unexpected or unusual reactions can occur. Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) are rare, occurring at an estimated annual rate of approximately one report per 1,000,000 doses of vaccines distributed in Canada.

What if my daughter is allergic to thimerosal or latex?

The vaccine and the packaging do not contain latex or thimerosal.

Talk to a public health nurse or your daughter's doctor before this vaccine is administered, if:

- you have any questions or concerns
- your daughter is ill with anything more serious than a cold
- your daughter is severely allergic to any part of the vaccine or any foods, drugs, bee stings etc., or
- your daughter has a weakened immune system