



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Prevention and Community Health
Post Office Box 47830
Olympia, Washington 98504-7830

DATE: November 3, 2022
TO: Vaccine Advisory Committee (VAC)
FROM: Michele Roberts, Assistant Secretary, Prevention and Community Health Division
RE: Response to the Vaccine Advisory Committee July 2022 Request
Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Vaccination at age 9

The Department of Health reviewed VAC's motion passed at the July 14, 2022 meeting which requested the Department to take action to encourage HPV vaccination. The Department of Health fully supports the motion passed that includes three recommendations as follows:

1. Encourage providers to consider routinely starting HPV vaccination at age 9 years, in accordance with current CDC guidance, and convey this information on all HPV immunization materials including printed and electronic communications issued by the Department of Health (DOH).

Response: The Department currently encourages HPV vaccination in our communications in alignment with current CDC guidance and will continue to promote this message. Materials reiterate the CDC recommendation to begin the HPV series at ages 11-12 but can start as early as age 9.

2. Change the Washington State Immunization Information System (WAIS) forecasting function so that an HPV vaccination prompt at age 9 alerts providers to start the HPV series and thereby help to extend protection against this cancer-causing viral infection to more Washington youth.

Response: The Department will change the age of the existing prompt in the WAIS to appear at age 9.

3. Track and publish state and county-level data on HPV vaccination coverage rates for children ages 9-10 annually.

Response: The Department will begin monitoring this age group as an additional metric beginning in January 2023 and posting to immunization dashboard in early 2024.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends "routine HPV vaccination at age 11 or 12 years. Vaccination can be given starting at age 9 years."¹ There are several benefits of beginning HPV vaccination at age 9 or 10:

A better immune response. HPV vaccines administered to younger adolescents are safe and provide effective, long-lasting protection from HPV-related cancers. Studies have shown that two doses of HPV vaccine given at least six months apart to adolescents at age 9 to 14 years worked as well or better than three doses given to older adolescents and young adults.¹

¹ Meites E, Kempe A, Markowitz LE. Use of a 2-Dose Schedule for Human Papillomavirus Vaccination — Updated Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. MMWR 2016;65(49):1405-8.

More opportunities to vaccinate. Starting earlier allows healthcare providers more time and opportunities to finish the two-dose series. If a provider vaccinates at 9 years of age, they can give the patient the second dose between 6 and 12 months after the first dose.¹ Even with a skipped annual visit, if the first dose is initiated before the 15th birthday, only two doses are needed. In Washington, one dose of Tdap is required for school when the child is age 11 to 12 years. This school requirement gives providers the opportunity to administer that second HPV dose at age 11 or 12.

Better protection against HPV infection when administered before exposure to the virus.

According to 2016 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey data², 4 percent of all 8th, 10th, and 12th graders reported having had sexual intercourse by age 13 years. About 8 percent of 8th grade students reported having ever had sexual intercourse; whereas, 25 percent of 10th graders and 50 percent of 12th graders have ever had sex. Additionally, HPV can be spread through close skin-to-skin touching during sex, including oral sex, without intercourse. [STD Facts - Human papillomavirus \(HPV\) \(cdc.gov\)](#).

HPV vaccines are safe and provide effective, long-lasting protection from HPV-related cancers. The Department is committed to working in partnership with you all to promote HPV vaccine uptake and increasing series completion. Thank you for routinely recommending and administering HPV immunization. We value your leadership and commitment to protect the people of Washington State.

Sincerely,



Michele Roberts, MPH, MCHES
Assistant Secretary
Prevention and Community Health Division
Washington State Department of Health

² Ask Healthy Youth Survey (2016). Healthy Youth Survey Fact Sheet: Sexual Behavior and Orientation for Washington State. Retrieved from <http://www.askhys.net/FactSheets>