

For Immediate Release

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CDC recommends only two HPV shots for younger adolescents

Fewer shots offer more incentive to prevent HPV cancers

CDC today recommended that 11- to 12-year-olds receive two doses of HPV vaccine at least six months apart rather than the previously recommended three doses to protect against cancers caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) infections. Teens and young adults who start the series later, at ages 15 through 26 years, will continue to need three doses of HPV vaccine to protect against cancer-causing HPV infection.

“Safe, effective, and long-lasting protection against HPV cancers with two visits instead of three means more Americans will be protected from cancer,” said CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. “This recommendation will make it simpler for parents to get their children protected in time.”

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted today to recommend a 2-dose HPV vaccine schedule for young adolescents. ACIP is a panel of experts that advises the CDC on vaccine recommendations in the United States. CDC Director Frieden approved the committee’s recommendations shortly after the vote. ACIP recommendations approved by the CDC Director become agency guidelines on the date published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).

CDC and ACIP made this recommendation after a thorough review of studies over several meetings. CDC and ACIP reviewed data from clinical trials showing two doses of HPV vaccine in younger adolescents (aged 9-14 years) produced an immune response similar or higher than the response in young adults (aged 16-26 years) who received three doses.

Generally, preteens receive HPV vaccine at the same time as whooping cough and meningitis vaccines. Two doses of HPV vaccine given at least six months apart at ages 11 and 12 years will provide safe, effective, and long-lasting protection against HPV cancers. Adolescents ages 13-14 are also able to receive HPV vaccination on the new 2-dose schedule.

CDC will provide guidance to parents, healthcare professionals, and insurers on the change in recommendation. On October 7, 2016, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved adding a 2-dose schedule for 9-valent HPV vaccine (Gardasil® 9) for adolescents ages 9 through 14 years. CDC encourages clinicians to begin implementing the 2-dose schedule in their practice to protect their preteen patients from HPV cancers.

ACIP, CDC, FDA and partners monitor vaccines in use in the U.S. year-round. These updated recommendations are an example of using the latest available evidence to provide the best possible protection against serious diseases.

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