



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## HPV Vaccine Prevents Cancer



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BURLINGTON – Do you know that the **human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine** prevents cancer?

That's right – cancer.

Certain types of **HPV infection** can cause cervical cancer in women and penile cancer in men. HPV can also cause throat cancer, anal cancer and genital warts in both men and women.

The HPV vaccine is recommended for both boys and girls at age 11 or 12 in order to protect them from the forms of the virus most likely to cause cancer. Three doses are given over the course of six months to protect against HPV infection. The vaccine is licensed, safe, and effective for all males and females ages 9 through 26.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently published results from the 2013 National Immunization Survey for teens. Sixty percent of Vermont females age 13-17 have had one dose of HPV vaccine, but only 43 percent have completed the three dose series. Despite an increase in awareness about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine, Vermont's coverage rates among girls are declining.

The numbers are even lower for boys in Vermont. Only 41 percent of boys have received one dose, and 21 percent have received all three doses.

“We’re missing opportunities to prevent cancer among Vermonters,” said Chris Finley, immunization program chief for the Vermont Department of Health.

Nationally there are about 26,000 HPV related cancers each year, and most could be prevented with the HPV vaccine. Just like other vaccines, the HPV vaccine needs to be given well in advance of exposure. And it's been shown to produce a better immune response in preteens than it does in older teens and young women.

Ask about vaccination every time you take your children for a healthcare visit.

More information about HPV vaccine is available at [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov)

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