



Meningococcal and HPV Parent Information Letter

As of July 2005, schools in Washington must make information available on Meningococcal and Human Papillomavirus diseases to parents or guardians of all students entering Grades 6-12.

Meningococcal Disease and Prevention

Meningococcal Disease

Meningococcal disease spreads by direct contact with infected persons by coughing, kissing, or sharing anything by mouth, such as water bottles, eating utensils, lipsticks, or toothbrushes. It can cause pneumonia, bloodstream infection, and meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord). Severe disease can cause brain damage, loss of hearing or limbs, and death. Fortunately, this life-threatening infection is rare – we usually have only about 30-60 reported each year in Washington, including 1 to 8 deaths. Adolescents and young adults are more likely to get meningococcal disease, especially if they live in group settings, like college dorms.

Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4)

MCV4 protects your child against the most common types of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease. Washington provides all recommended vaccines for kids through age 18, available from healthcare providers across the state. Providers may charge an office visit fee and an administration fee to give the vaccine. People who can't afford the administration fee can ask to have it waived. Healthy teens should get one dose of MCV4 at age 11 through 12 years. Teens who did not get their first dose at that time should get a dose as soon as possible. A second dose (or booster) is now recommended. Teens should get a booster at age 16 through 18 years or anytime before college. Talk to your healthcare provider about this vaccine.

Learn More

Learn more about meningococcal disease and how to prevent it:

Washington State Department of Health

Meningococcal information:

www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/Diseases/MeningitisMeningococcalDisease.aspx

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Meningococcal vaccine information: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-mening.pdf

Disease information: www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/index.html

Pre-teen immunizations: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/preteens-adol.htm

College students & young adults: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/college.html

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Vaccine Education Center

Meningococcal questions & answers: www.chop.edu/healthinfo/meningococcal-infections.html

National Meningitis Association www.nmaus.org

Human papillomavirus (HPV) Disease and Prevention

Human papillomavirus (HPV) Disease

What is HPV?

HPV is a common virus that spreads primarily through sexual contact. Up to 75 percent of HPV infections occur among people 15 through 24 years old. HPV causes most known cervical cancers, anal cancers, and genital warts. The types of HPV that can cause genital warts are not the same as the types that cause cancer. Some types of HPV can cause penile, anal, head, and neck cancers.

What are the symptoms of HPV?

Most of the time infected individuals have no symptoms and can spread the virus without knowing it. Some people know they have HPV because they have a symptom like genital warts. Women may find out they have HPV through cervical cancer

screening (Pap tests) and HPV testing. Health care providers do not usually test for HPV unless they find abnormal cervical cell changes in a Pap test.

How can HPV infection be prevented?

The best way to prevent HPV infection is to abstain from all sexual activity. Even people with only one lifetime partner can get HPV if their partner had previous sexual partners. Using condoms during sex offers good protection against sexual infections like HPV. The HPV vaccines offer by far the best protection if given before sexual activity starts – vaccines do not get rid of existing HPV infections. The HPV vaccine can prevent infections from some of the most common and serious types of HPV that cause warts, cervical, and anal cancers.

HPV Vaccine

What HPV vaccines are available?

Two HPV vaccines are available:

- HPV4 – licensed for males and females. It protects against four types of HPV. These include two types of HPV that cause 75 percent of cervical cancers in women and most anal cancers in men, and two types that cause 90 percent of genital warts in both women and men.
- HPV2– licensed only for females. It protects against the two types of HPV that cause 75 percent of cervical cancers.

Who should get the vaccine and when should they get it?

- Females – the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice (ACIP) recommends routine vaccination for all girls age 11 through 12 years old against HPV. For unvaccinated females, the recommendation goes up through age 26. Health care providers may also give the vaccine to girls as young as 9 years.
- Males – the ACIP recently approved a recommendation for routine vaccination of boys 11 through 12 years of age. For unvaccinated males, the recommendation goes up through age 21. Health care providers may vaccinate boys as young as 9 years and certain men 22 through 26 years of age.

To be up-to-date on this immunization, males and females need three doses of the vaccine. Talk to your health care provider about the vaccine schedule. HPV vaccine is not required for school in Washington.

Are Pap tests still recommended for females who get the HPV vaccine?

Yes. The HPV vaccine does not protect against all types of HPV that can cause cancer and warts, so females still need Pap tests.

Where can I find the HPV vaccine?

Washington provides all recommended vaccines for kids through age 18, available from healthcare providers across the state. Providers may charge an office visit fee and an administration fee to give the vaccine. People who can't afford the administration fee can ask to have it waived. For people age 19 and older, the vaccine is available from many clinics and pharmacies. Most health insurance plans cover the vaccine for people recommended to get it. Call your health plan to check your coverage. For adults without health insurance, the companies that make these vaccines have programs to help pay for them. Find out if your health care provider participates in these programs.

For more information on HPV, the vaccine, and cervical and anal cancer:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/

Washington State Department of Health: www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/348-187_HumanPapillomavirusVaccineFactsheet.pdf

American Sexual Health Association: www.ashasexualhealth.org/healthcare-providers/hpv-toolkit/hpv-vaccine-information.html

American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org