



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Karen Shelton, MD
State Health Commissioner

Department of Health
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February 27, 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians of Rising 7th Graders:

As the Virginia State Health Commissioner, a doctor, and a parent, children and their health are a priority to me. I especially value the role you have in protecting your child's health.

As the end of the school year approaches, I want to make sure you and your child are prepared for 7th grade next year. It is important to check in with your child's healthcare provider to ensure your child is up to date on preventative care, including routine immunizations and annual dental cleanings. If your child does not have a healthcare provider, you can find a Vaccines for Children provider at <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/immunization/vvfc/locatevvfcprovider/>. These providers are also able to administer free vaccines to persons who are not able to pay.

To enter 7th grade in Virginia, three vaccines are required:

- Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis)
- MenACWY (meningococcal ACWY)
- HPV (Human Papillomavirus)

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) recommend the Tdap, MenACWY, and HPV vaccines for all boys and girls ages 11 to 12, or as early as age 9.

Tdap vaccines protect against three serious diseases: tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough). Meningococcal vaccines help protect against bacteria that cause meningococcal disease. HPV is a virus that causes six types of cancers. These include almost all cases of cervical cancer and most cancers of the head and neck. The HPV vaccine can prevent most of these cancers. Receiving the HPV vaccine at this age gives your child the best protection against infection and cancer in the future. As a parent or guardian, you have the unique right to decide if your child gets the HPV vaccine.

Please review the enclosed information, including HPV's link to cancers, and discuss these vaccines with your healthcare provider. For more information about school immunization requirements in Virginia, please visit <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/immunization/requirements/>. If you have any questions, please contact the VDH Immunization Outreach Coordinator, Andrea Mendes at (804) 514-2649 or andrea.mendes@vdh.virginia.gov.

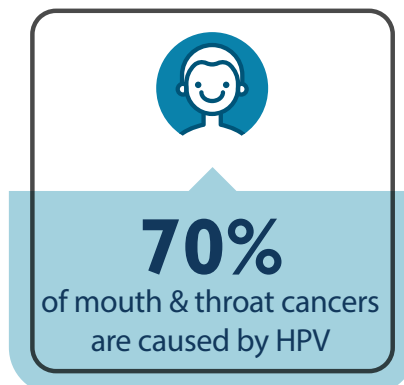
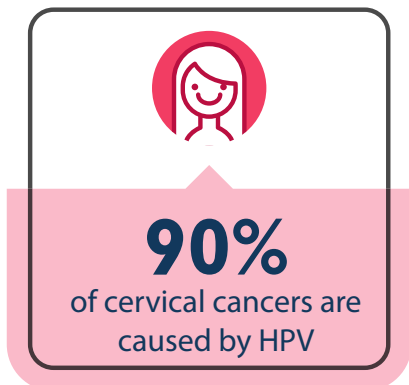
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Shelton".

Karen Shelton, MD
State Health Commissioner

TAKE A SHOT AT CANCER!

Protect your child from HPV-related cancers by **vaccinating**. The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) **spreads easily**, and most people don't know they have it.



The HPV vaccine protects your child's future.

The vaccine is recommended with other routine adolescent vaccinations



Meningitis



HPV



Tdap

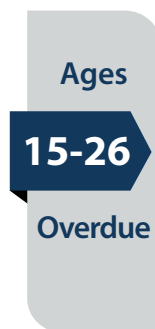


Prevents



types of cancer

HPV can be prevented in both **girls** and **boys** through **vaccination**.
Boys and girls should **complete** the vaccine series by **age 13**.



7th Grade



SAFE



EFFECTIVE



LONG-LASTING

Talk to your child's provider today about preventing cancer!

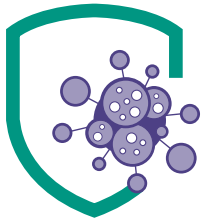
www.vdh.virginia.gov/immunization/requirements/

www.cdc.gov/HPV

VDH VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH

HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV) VACCINE FACTS

FACT1: HPV VACCINE PREVENTS CANCER



Prevents
6 different
types of cancers



37,000+
cancers are caused
by HPV each year



Healthy diet



Physical activity



Sunscreen



No tobacco



Vaccine

We can help our children reduce their risk of developing cancer in the future by helping them make **healthy choices**. We can also help prevent cancer by getting our children the **HPV vaccine**.

FACT2: HPV VACCINE IS SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

More than
15 years
worth of **safety** and
effectiveness monitoring
that continues today.

98%
effective at creating
immunity to HPV
types in the vaccine.

More than
135 million
doses of HPV vaccines
have been distributed. Data
continue to show the HPV
vaccine is **safe** and **effective**.

FACT3: HPV VACCINE PROVIDES IMMUNITY



The HPV vaccine produces the **strongest immune response** in preteens. To work best, the HPV vaccine should be given in a series of shots between the ages of **11 to 12**, or as early as 9 years old.

FACT4: HPV VACCINE PROTECTS GIRLS AND BOYS



Since 2006, the percentage of cervical precancers caused by HPV has dropped by **40%** among vaccinated females.



The HPV vaccine can prevent the **80%** of head and neck cancers caused by HPV in males.

FACT5: HPV VACCINE OFFERS LONG-TERM PROTECTION



People who **received** HPV vaccine remained **protected** from the virus with **no** evidence of the protection decreasing over time.

Where to get the HPV vaccine:

- **Healthcare provider**
- **Local Health Department**
- **Vaccines for Children Provider**

Vaccines for Preteens and Teens: What Parents Should Know

All boys and girls need three vaccines at ages 11-12 to protect against serious diseases. Preteens and teens should also get a yearly flu vaccine, as well as any vaccines they missed when they were younger.

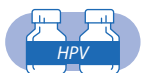


What vaccines does my child need?



Dose 1: Ages 11-12
Dose 2: Age 16

Meningococcal vaccines protect against a type of bacteria that can cause serious illnesses. The two most common types of illnesses include infections of the lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) and bloodstream. All preteens should get the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY). Teens may also receive a serogroup B meningococcal vaccine (MenB), preferably at 16 through 18 years old.



Dose 1: Ages 11-12
Dose 2: 6-12 months later

HPV vaccine protects both girls and boys from future infections that can lead to certain types of cancer. Children who get their first dose on or after their 15th birthday will need three doses.



Dose 1: Ages 11-12

Tdap vaccine protects against three serious diseases: tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough).



Yearly Dose:
Ages 6 months and older

Flu vaccine helps protect against seasonal flu. Even healthy preteens and teens can get very sick from flu and spread it to others. The best time to get an annual flu vaccine is before flu begins causing illness in your community, ideally before the end of October. Flu vaccination is beneficial as long as flu viruses are circulating, even in January or later.

When should my child be vaccinated?

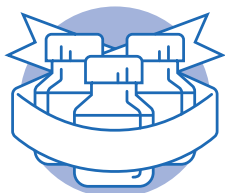
A good time to get these vaccines is during a yearly wellness check. Your child can also get these vaccines at a physical exam required for school, sports, or camp. **If your child missed any doses of recommended vaccines, ask your doctor or nurse about getting them now.**

Are these vaccines safe?

These vaccines have been studied very carefully and are very safe. They can cause mild side effects, like soreness or redness in the part of the arm where the shot is given. Some preteens or teens might faint after getting a shot. Sitting or lying down when getting a shot, and then for about 15 minutes after the shot, can help prevent fainting. Serious side effects are rare. It is very important to tell the doctor or nurse if your child has any serious allergies, including allergies to yeast, latex, or chicken eggs, before they receive any vaccines.

Can I get help paying for these vaccines?

Most health insurance plans cover routine vaccinations. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program also provides vaccines for children 18 years and younger who are uninsured, underinsured, Medicaid-eligible, American Indian, or Alaska Native. Learn more at www.cdc.gov/Features/VFCprogram.



Talk to your child's doctor or nurse about the vaccines your child needs or visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents

