

NJ “Start at 9” Call to Action to Prevent HPV Cancers



Organizations that have endorsed starting the HPV vaccine series at age 9:

- American Cancer Society
- New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- New Jersey Department of Health
- Advocare
- Rutgers Cancer Institute
- ScreenNJ
- Crossroads for Hope
- Capital Health
- Union County, Office of Health Management
- Zufall Health

Dear Provider:

HPV infection affects 85 percent of the population and can cause 6 types of cancer, including cervical, vaginal, vulvar, penile, anal, and oropharyngeal cancer, as well as genital warts.¹ An estimated 6,488 new cases of HPV-Associated cancer occurred among New Jersey residents, between 2016 and 2019.²

The HPV vaccine, which is recommended to adolescents between ages 9 and 12, is safe and extremely effective in preventing HPV infections and cancers. Recent studies confirm that “on-time” series completion (two doses – AAP and NJDOH) is critical to maximize efficacy against HPV cancers.³ Unfortunately, a new analysis estimates that only 19% of 13-year-old adolescents in NJ (lowest in the country) have completed the HPV vaccine series leaving most of the group at risk for future HPV cancers.⁴

The latest research suggests that starting the HPV vaccination series at age 9 can increase the percentage of your patients that are up to date by age 13, in some cases by 20 - 30%.⁵ The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Cancer Society, and the National HPV Vaccination Roundtable recommend starting the series at age 9. This strategy is consistent with the ACIP recommendation, stating the HPV series can start at age 9.

Reasons cited for starting the HPV vaccine series at age 9 include:¹

- Provides more time for completion of the series.
- Decreases questions about the vaccine increasing sexual activity (it doesn't).
- Decreases requests for only the “school-required vaccines.”
- Increases the likelihood of full vaccination before first HPV exposure.
- Is highly acceptable to systems, providers, and parents

It is also important to use a strong, presumptive recommendation such as, “your child is now 9 years old and so it is time for the HPV vaccine to prevent certain cancers.” Indeed, evidence suggests that a provider recommendation is the most persuasive reason that parents choose to vaccinate their children. Data shows that this type of recommendation can improve vaccinations by up to 5 times.⁶ HPV vaccination is cancer prevention!

Implement other HPV vaccination best practices to support **Start at 9** in your clinic such as:

- ✓ Establish a standard of care to start at age 9.
- ✓ Set your electronic health record notifications to start at age 9.
- ✓ Review vaccination status at every visit - not just well checks.
- ✓ Proactively recall patients who are not up-to-date on their HPV vaccination.

Recommend starting the HPV vaccine at age 9 today!

¹ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Clinical Overview of HPV. July 24, 2024.

² New Jersey Department of Health Data Brief on Human Papillomavirus. NJ Department of Health. September 2023.

³ Falcaro M, et al. Lancet, 2021; 398:2084-2092. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)02178-4/abstract?ref=thepeak.thebreasties.org](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)02178-4/abstract?ref=thepeak.thebreasties.org)

⁴ [American Cancer Society, Cancer Prevention & Early Detection Facts & Figures, 2025-2026.](#)

⁵ Perkins R., Oliver K., and Humiston S., HPV Vaccination Starting at Age 9. Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics. February 2023. [Article collection: HPV Vaccination Starting at Age 9 \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

⁶ Saslow, et al., Human Papillomavirus Vaccination 2020 Guideline Update: American Cancer Society Guideline Adaptation. CA CANCER J CLIN 2020;70:274–280.