



News from the Office of
ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

NEWS RELEASE

Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein

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HPV Vaccine Proven Safe and Effective in Prevention of Cancers

*Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the American Academy of Pediatrics
Recommend Vaccination of Females and Males*

ERIE COUNTY, NY— The Erie County Department of Health (“ECDOH”) encourages residents and parents to take advantage of safe and effective vaccination to prevent the spread of human papilloma virus (“HPV”) and prevention of cervical as well as other cancers. “HPV is a preventable, sexually transmitted infection” **said Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein.** “Most cervical cancer is caused by HPV, a very common sexually transmitted infection that can also cause genital warts. The HPV vaccine protects against the HPV types that most often cause cervical, vaginal, vulvar, and throat cancers.”

HPV vaccine is highly effective in preventing HPV infections, which cause about 70 percent of cervical and anal cancers and about 60 percent of throat cancers. Widespread vaccination has the potential to reduce cervical cancer deaths around the world by as much as two-thirds, if all women were to get the vaccine. Routine HPV vaccination is recommended for girls and boys at age 11 or 12 years; vaccination also is recommended for females through age 26 years and for males through age 21 years who have not been vaccinated previously. Vaccination can also reduce the need for medical care, biopsies, and invasive procedures associated with follow-up from abnormal Pap tests, thus helping to reduce health care costs and anxieties related to abnormal Pap tests and follow-up procedures.

Two vaccines are available to prevent HPV types that cause most cervical cancers (Cervarix) and (Gardasil) have been licensed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Gardasil also prevents HPV types that cause most genital warts. Gardasil also has been shown to prevent some cancers of the anus, vulva (area around the opening of the vagina), and vagina.

The CDC has approved the HPV vaccines as safe and effective. Both vaccines were studied in thousands of people around the world, and these studies showed no serious safety concerns. Side effects reported in these studies were mild, including pain where the shot was given, fever,

dizziness, and nausea. Vaccine safety continues to be monitored by CDC and the FDA. More than 46 million doses of HPV vaccine have been distributed in the United States as of June 2012.

Most people who become infected with HPV do not even know they have it. HPV is passed on through genital contact, most often during vaginal and anal sex. HPV may also be passed on during oral sex and skin to skin genital contact. HPV can be passed on between straight and same-sex partners—even when the infected partner has no signs or symptoms.

Approximately 20 million Americans are currently infected with HPV. Another 6 million people become newly infected each year. HPV is so common that at least 50% of sexually active men and women get it at some point in their lives. About 1% of sexually active adults in the U.S. have genital warts at any one time. Each year, about 12,000 women get cervical cancer in the U.S. Almost all of these cancers are HPV-associated.

The HPV vaccine is a very safe and effective vaccine. ECDOH recommends that you discuss vaccinations with and receive them from your primary care provider. For more information on HPV Vaccine:

Erie County Department of Health

<http://www.erie.gov/health/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/stdfact-hpv-vaccine-young-women.htm>