



NCI-DESIGNATED CANCER CENTERS

International HPV Awareness Day Toolkit

-February 2019-




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OVERVIEW

International HPV Awareness Day is Monday, March 4. The day, developed in 2018 by the International Papillomavirus Society (IPVS), is an annual focal point to educate about HPV, its associated cancers and prevention against the virus.

This year's IPVS campaign theme is "The World's Most Viral Secret" and will highlight the visibility and awareness of HPV, which can easily be shared like viral online content and is considered by the health care community to be much more important to know about. The campaign call to action is simply to #AskAboutHPV. IPVS has a [campaign toolkit](#) available with HPV patient-focused information that can be used on or offline to address basic knowledge gaps in relation to the virus, prevention, screening and treatment.

We are asking that all cancer centers help disseminate HPV information to their social media audiences on and before March 4 using the hashtags #AskAboutHPV #eliminateHPV #CancerPrevention.

KEY MESSAGES

The general public should be aware of important information regarding the opportunity to eliminate multiple cancers in males and females with human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination. The following points can be shared with news media to highlight this information when pitching an HPV-related cancer elimination story.

- HPV infections are incredibly common. Almost all sexually active people (75-80%) will be infected at some point in their lives.
- Most HPV infections have no symptoms and are naturally cleared. However, in some cases, HPV infection can lead to several types of devastating cancers later in life, including cervical, oropharyngeal, anal and genital cancers.
- The incidence of some of these cancers is rapidly increasing, so we must take action now to prevent a future epidemic.
- The majority of these cancers could be eliminated with the HPV vaccine, which has been proven safe and effective.
- Vaccination rates in the United States remain low, especially when compared to many other countries in the world.
- Countries that have achieved high rates of vaccination, such as Australia and Denmark, have documented evidence of fewer HPV infections, genital warts, and precancerous lesions of the cervix.
- Pediatricians and family medicine practitioners must advocate for the vaccine to increase uptake and protect the future health of our children. As oncologists, we ask primary health care providers to strongly recommend HPV vaccination to prevent your patients from becoming our patients.
- Parents must become vocal advocates for protecting their children and insist that their doctors give the HPV vaccine when recommended. Avoiding the vaccine now is a missed opportunity to protect their children against pain and suffering from cancer in the future.

FACTS & FIGURES

When sharing information about HPV with the news media, it is important that it be based in scientific evidence from reliable sources. For ease of reference, important data related to HPV vaccination and HPV-related cancers have been compiled here, with sources included.

What is HPV?

- The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a group of more than 150 related viruses. Some HPV types cause warts or papillomas (non-cancerous tumors) and others cause cancers. ([CDC](#))
- HPV is the most commonly sexually transmitted infection in the world, and is transmitted through intimate skin-to-skin contact. ([CDC](#))
- HPV will infect 75-80% of people at some point in their lives. Nearly 80 million people are currently infected in the United States, and 14 million new infections occur every year. ([CDC](#))

HPV and Cancer

- HPV is responsible for almost all cervical cancers, more than 90% of anal cancer, roughly 2/3 of oropharyngeal cancers and the majority of vulvar, vaginal and penile cancers. ([CDC](#))
- Each year in the United States, nearly 39,000 new HPV-related cancers are diagnosed. This includes roughly 15,800 men and 23,000 women. ([CDC](#))
- Worldwide, more than 600,000 new HPV-related cancers are diagnosed each year: ([Forman et al](#))
- Worldwide, more than 300,000 women died of cervical cancer in 2018. ([IARC](#)) In the United States ~13,170 new cases of invasive cervical cancer will be diagnosed in 2019 and ~4,250 women will form this cancer ([ACS](#))
- Oropharyngeal cancers are more common in men and surpass cervical cancers in annual incidence. ([Van Dyne et al](#))
- There is no effective early screening test for oropharyngeal cancers. Most cancers are therefore diagnosed at later stages, when current treatments are less effective and result in significant adverse health effects. ([Schmeler and Sturgis](#))
- In the United States, the overall annual direct medical cost burden of preventing and treating HPV-related diseases is at least \$8 billion. ([Chesson et al](#))

The HPV Vaccine

- Each HPV vaccine passed extensive safety testing before being approved by the FDA. The most common side effects are mild, including pain, redness, and swelling at the injection site. ([CDC](#))
- Since its introduction in 2006, more than 100 million doses of the HPV vaccine have been distributed nationally and more than 270 million doses globally. ([CDC](#), [WHO](#))
- The CDC recommends all children complete the vaccine series between ages 9-13. Children younger than 15 should receive two doses of the vaccine six months apart. Those above age 15 should complete a three-dose series. The vaccine is approved for men and women up to age 26. ([CDC](#))
- The recommended ages are based on the most robust immune response. Further, the vaccine is protective, not curative, meaning that maximum effectiveness is achieved when administered before any exposure to HPV. ([ACIP](#))
- Nationally, 63.1% of girls and 44.3% of boys have completed the HPV vaccine series. Approximately 68% of girls and 62% of boys have received at least one dose. ([CDC](#))
- The Department of Health and Human Services, through the Healthy People 2020 initiative, has introduced a goal of reaching 80% vaccination rates by the year 2020. ([Healthy People 2020](#))
- The U.S. has already seen a 64% decline in the 4 HPV types that the vaccine protects against among girls aged 14-19. There was a 34% decrease among girls 20-24. ([Markowitz et al](#))
- Several countries have achieved the recommended high vaccination rates including Rwanda (~[93%](#)), England (~[84%](#)), Scotland (~[85%](#)), Portugal ([88%](#)), and Australia (~[80% females and 76% males](#)).
- Analyses of vaccine effectiveness data from multiple countries clearly shows that the higher the HPV vaccine coverage the greater the reduction in precancerous cervical lesions and HPV infection prevalence. ([Drolet et al](#))
- A study from Finland demonstrated for the first time that cervical cancer incidence was 0 among vaccinated women. ([Luostarinen et al](#))
- Studies show that many pediatricians are not consistently recommending the HPV vaccine to parents. ([Gilkey et al](#))
- Vaccination rates may be improved by addressing physician's perceptions about parental acceptance of HPV vaccination. ([Allison et al](#))
- The HPV vaccine has been shown not to increase promiscuity. Vaccination in the recommended ages was not associated with increased sexual activity-related outcome rates. ([Bednarczyk et al](#))