

Five Steps for Recommending HPV Vaccine to Patients

The school year is just around the corner. **Now is a great time to recommend the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to your pre-teen and adolescent patients.**

Dental providers play a unique role in HPV cancer prevention. Pre-teen and adolescent patients tend to see the dentist twice yearly, which may be more often than they see their primary care provider. The HPV vaccine protects against oropharyngeal cancers, which have been on the rise. This is an opportunity for dental professionals [to promote HPV vaccination](#) by providing counseling to parents/guardians of children nine years and older.

Starting HPV vaccine at age nine is considered best practice by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), American Academy of Pediatrics, and American Cancer Society and complies with ACIP guidelines. Starting at nine provides a robust immune response and results in higher on time completion rates of the two-dose series by age 13, which means more anticipated HPV cancers prevented.

One of the most significant predictors of vaccine uptake is a strong recommendation from a health care provider. Additionally, receiving an HPV vaccine recommendation from multiple sources contributes to increased HPV vaccine uptake. Studies show that dental professionals feel recommending HPV vaccine is within their scope of practice, and most parents believe dentists are qualified to discuss HPV vaccine.

Steps you can take:

1. Add a question about HPV vaccine status to your health history questionnaire.
2. [Educate staff](#) on how to talk about HPV vaccine as cancer prevention.
3. [Educate parents/guardians and recommend](#) HPV vaccine to your patients nine years and older.
4. Place an [HPV poster](#) in the waiting room.
5. Hand out HPV recommendation goody bag cards.
 - We created a business card size material that can fit easily into a patient's take-home goody bag! Click ["Print business Cards"](#).

If parents/guardians are ready to get their child vaccinated after speaking with you about the HPV vaccine, refer patients to their primary care provider, school-based health clinic, or their local health jurisdiction.

Thank you for routinely recommending HPV vaccine and working to keep children and families healthy.

For more information about HPV at nine visit: doh.wa.gov/hpv-at-nine.

References

Harris KL, Tay D, Kaiser D, Praag A, Rutkoski H, Dixon BL, Pinzon LM, Winkler JR, Kepka D. The perspectives, barriers, and willingness of Utah dentists to engage in human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine practices. *Hum Vaccin Immunother.* 2020;16(2):436-444. doi: 10.1080/21645515.2019.1649550. Epub 2019 Oct 4. PMID: 31361179; PMCID: PMC7062442.

Stull C, Freese R, Sarvas E. Parent perceptions of dental care providers' role in human papillomavirus prevention and vaccine advocacy. *J Am Dent Assoc.* 2020 Aug;151(8):560-567. doi: 10.1016/j.adaj.2020.05.004. PMID: 32718485; PMCID: PMC7478858.