

For more information about Gardasil and the Human Papilloma Virus check out these websites:

- [www.gardasil.com](http://www.gardasil.com)
- [www.youngwomenshealth.org](http://www.youngwomenshealth.org)
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

Your decision regarding the Gardasil vaccine involves frank discussions among parents, daughters, and our healthcare team. Factors including your child's age, personal views concerning sexuality, and the medical facts must all be considered. We look forward to answering your questions about the Gardasil vaccine.

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# Gardasil: Protecting Against HPV



PROTECTING WOMEN FROM THE  
HUMAN PAPILOMA VIRUS



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## What is Gardasil?

Gardasil is a vaccine available to girls and women 9 to 26 years of age for the prevention of cervical cancer, precancerous or dysplastic lesions, and genital warts caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) types 6, 11, 16, and 18.

Gardasil protects against four HPV types, which together cause 70% of cervical cancers and 90% of genital warts.

The vaccine is given through a series of three shots over a six month period.



## WHAT IS HUMAN PAPILOMA VIRUS?

Genital human papilloma virus (HPV) infection is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that is caused by the human papilloma virus. HPV is the name of a group of viruses that includes more than 100 different strains or types. Approximately 20 million people in the USA are currently infected with HPV. At least 50 percent of sexually active men and women acquire genital HPV infection at some point in their lives. By age 50, at least 80 percent of women will have acquired genital HPV infection. About 6.2 million Americans get a new genital HPV infection each year.

## ABSTINENCE: PROMOTING THE HEALTHIEST OPTION FOR YOUR CHILD:

At Bridgewater Pediatrics we strongly believe that the healthiest choice for our young people is to abstain from sexual activity. Early onset of sexual activity puts young people at risk for unwanted pregnancy, emotional pain, and sexually transmitted diseases that are not preventable through vaccines. We consider it a privilege to support our patients and their parents with open dialogue about sexuality and healthy decision-making. We strive to assist our patients to make the best choices for their overall health and well-being.

## Who Should Get the HPV Vaccine?

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The HPV vaccine is recommended for girls and women 9 through 26 years of age. These recommendations have been proposed by the ACIP, a national group of experts that advises the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on vaccine issues. We believe that your child should be developmentally ready to discuss issues related to sexuality at the time of vaccination and to understand the reasons she is receiving the vaccine. We believe the vaccine affords the child the opportunity to receive appropriate information regarding her sexuality and to be better prepared for healthy sexual decision making.



### WHY IS THE HPV VACCINE RECOMMENDED FOR SUCH YOUNG GIRLS?

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Ideally, females should get the vaccine before they are sexually active. This is because the vaccine is most effective in girls/women who have not yet acquired any of the four HPV types covered by the vaccine. Girls/women who have not been infected with any of the four HPV types will get the full benefits of the vaccine.

### HOW LONG DOES VACCINE PROTECTION LAST? WILL A BOOSTER SHOT BE NEEDED?

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The length of the vaccine protection (immunity) is usually not known when a vaccine is first introduced. So far, studies have followed women for five years and found that women are still protected. More research is being done to find out how long protection will last, and if a booster vaccine is needed years later.

### WHAT ABOUT VACCINATING BOYS?

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We do not yet know if the vaccine is effective in boys or men. It is possible that vaccinating males will have health benefits for them by preventing genital warts and rare cancers, such as penile and anal cancer. It is also possible that vaccinating boys/men will have indirect health benefits for girls/women. Studies are now being done to find out if the vaccine works to prevent HPV infection and disease in males. When more information is available, this vaccine may be licensed and recommended for boys/men as well.

### WHAT DOES THE VACCINE NOT PROTECT AGAINST?

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Because the vaccine does not protect against all types of HPV, it will not prevent all cases of cervical cancer or genital warts. About 30% of cervical cancers will not be prevented by the vaccine, therefore, abstinence among young people is still the only guaranteed safe choice for prevention of cervical cancer. It will be important for women to continue get-



ting screened for cervical cancer (regular Pap tests). Also, the vaccine does not prevent about 10% of genital warts-nor will it prevent other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). So it will still be important for sexually active adults to reduce exposure to HPV and other STIs.

## Safety of the HPV Vaccine

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The FDA has licensed the HPV vaccine as safe and effective. This vaccine has been tested in over 11,000 females (ages 9-26 years) around the world. These studies have shown no serious side effects. The most common side effect is soreness at the injection site. The CDC, working with the FDA, will continue to monitor the safety of the vaccine after it is in general use. There is no thimerosal or mercury in the HPV vaccine.

## Cost and Coverage of the HPV vaccine

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The Gardasil vaccine is very costly. While some insurance companies may cover the vaccine, others may not. Most large insurance plans usually cover the costs of recommended vaccines. However, there is often a short lag-time after a vaccine is recommended, before it is available and covered by health plans. Please check with your insurance plan.