

Key Messages for Physicians on HPV Vaccination

A key part of building physician confidence and trust in the HPV vaccine is to use consistent messages backed by research. When professional communities speak with the same message, they reinforce facts and minimize the spread of misinformation.

Medical societies can use these key messages to inform the creation of content, tools, or materials to be used with a provider or health professional audience. Messages may also be used by medical society/physician leaders for presentations and other engagements. Note that this document is not a training tool for providers but a reference tool for medical societies. To answer parents' questions about HPV vaccination, physicians may refer to [Effectively Communicating with Parents about the HPV Vaccine](#).

Audience:

Medical societies – for use when communicating with physicians, specifically paediatricians, gynaecologists, and family physicians

Context:

- Physicians may underestimate the incidence and risk of cervical cancer and HPV infection which lead to not routinely recommending the HPV vaccine.
- Physicians may underestimate HPV vaccine safety and effectiveness. This leads to hesitation to recommend the vaccine. Read more in the [research brief](#).
- Whenever HPV vaccination is discussed, it should be through the lens of cancer prevention.

Objective:

Medical societies use consistent evidence-based messages when communicating about the HPV vaccine.

Important Note:

Evidence shows that discussing HPV vaccination in the context of cancer prevention leads to increased vaccination rates whereas starting the discussion on HPV vaccination in the context of sexual activity, sexual transmission, or sexually transmitted infections has the opposite effect [1, 2]. Generally, transmission of illness is not covered when discussing vaccinations. Treat HPV vaccination the same as other vaccines.

OVERARCHING MESSAGE

HPV vaccination is cervical cancer prevention.

As physicians, it is our responsibility to recommend the vaccine and explain to people why it is essential that all young girls receive it.

<p>Key Message 1: HPV, or human papillomavirus, is a common virus that causes almost all cervical cancer [3].</p>	<p>Key Message 2: HPV vaccination is cervical cancer prevention [4].</p>	<p>Key Message 3: The HPV vaccine is safe and provides long-lasting protection against cervical cancer [5].</p>	<p>Key Message 4: HPV vaccination works best when given to girls on-time, between ages 9 and 14 [6, 7].</p>
<p>Supporting Fact 1.1 8 out of 10 women will get infected with HPV at some point in their lifetime [8].</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 2.1 HPV infection has no treatment, but the HPV vaccine can prevent it [9].</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 3.1 Scientists and researchers monitoring the safety of all vaccines, continue to be reassured of the HPV vaccine safety profile [5].</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 4.1 Vaccination between 9 - 14 years provides the best immune response [6, 7].</p>
<p>Supporting Fact 1.2 In India, 84.1% of cervical cancers are due to HPV 16 and 18 [10].</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 2.2 If all Indian girls were vaccinated it could translate into saving nearly 50,000 lives per year [10].</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 3.2 The Drugs Controller General of India (DGCI) approved the HPV vaccine in 2008 [11, 12]. More than 300 million doses of HPV vaccine have been safely given worldwide [13].</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 4.2 Research indicates a recommendation from a health care provider is the most important predictor in parents choosing to vaccinate their child [14].</p>
<p>Supporting Fact 1.3 Cervical cancer is one of the most common cancers among women in India [15]. More than 123,000 Indian women are diagnosed annually [16].</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 2.3 The vaccine provides over 90% protection against HPV infections caused by HPV types 16 and 18 when given at the recommended ages [17].</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 3.3 Surveillance has not detected any adverse outcomes above the expected common side effects with most vaccines [5].</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 4.3 HPV vaccination can prevent most cervical cancer when given at the recommended ages [18].</p>
<p>Supporting Fact 1.4 A woman dies every 8 minutes of cervical cancer in India [19]. (77,348 cervical cancer deaths in 2020 [16].)</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 2.4 The Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) [20], Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI) [21], Asia-Oceania Research Organisation in Genital Infection and Neoplasia (AOGIN) [22], and the Indian Medical Association (IMA) [23] recommend the HPV vaccine to prevent cervical cancer.</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 3.4 Current data suggest the vaccine protection is ongoing, with no sign of waning protection [24, 25].</p>	<p>Supporting Fact 4.4 Children and young adults 15 years and older who have not been vaccinated, or haven't received all their doses, should get the vaccine as soon as possible [17].</p>

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