



# UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER

## Facts and Myths about the HPV Vaccine (Gardasil-9)

HPV vaccine prevents infection with human papillomavirus (HPV) types that are associated with many cancers, including:

- **cervical cancer** in females,
- **vaginal and vulvar cancers** in females,
- **anal cancer** in females and males,
- **throat cancer** in females and males, and
- **penile cancer** in males.

In addition, HPV vaccine prevents infection with HPV types that cause **genital warts** in both females and males. HPV infection usually comes from sexual contact, and most people will become infected at some point in their life. Most infections will go away on their own and not cause serious problems. But thousands of women and men get cancer and other diseases from HPV.

HPV vaccine may be given beginning at age 9 years through age 26 years. You may choose to receive the HPV vaccine if you are older than 26, though the rates of effectiveness after age 26 aren't known, and the vaccine may not be covered by your insurance.

### Common questions about the HPV vaccine:

1. *How much does the HPV cost?*

This vaccine is a 3-dose series. If you are paying out of pocket, each dose costs \$226.50. Some insurances, including SHIP, will cover the cost of the vaccine.

2. *Can I eat spicy foods after receiving the HPV vaccine?*

Yes. You do not need to avoid any specific foods before or after receiving the HPV vaccine.

3. *Can I bathe or shower after receiving the HPV vaccine?*

Yes. Getting the skin wet has no effect on the vaccine.

4. *Can I work out or go to the gym after receiving the HPV vaccine?*

Yes, exercise and sweating do not have any effect on how well the vaccine works.

5. *Do I need to fast before receiving the HPV vaccine?*

No, and in fact, we encourage you not to get the vaccine on an empty stomach. In fact, people sometimes faint after a medical procedure, including vaccination. Therefore, it is actually good to have something to eat and drink in the morning before you get the vaccine. After receiving the vaccine, sitting or lying down for about 15 minutes can help prevent fainting and injuries caused by a fall.

6. *Can I get the HPV vaccine if I am not feeling well?*

Maybe. If you have a mild illness, such as a cold, you can probably get the vaccine today. If you are moderately or severely ill, you should probably wait until you recover. Your doctor can advise you.

### Risks of a vaccine reaction:

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[www.health.umd.edu](http://www.health.umd.edu)

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Most people who get HPV vaccine do not have any serious problems with it.

Mild or moderate problems following HPV vaccine:

Reactions in the arm where the shot was given:

- Soreness (about 9 people in 10)
- Redness or swelling (about 1 person in 3)

Fever:

- Mild (100°F) (about 1 person in 10)
- Moderate (102°F) (about 1 person in 65)

Other problems:

- Headache (about 1 person in 3)

Problems that could happen after any injected vaccine:

- People sometimes faint after a medical procedure, including vaccination. Sitting or lying down for about 15 minutes can help prevent fainting and injuries caused by a fall. Tell your doctor if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.
- Some people get severe pain in the shoulder and have difficulty moving the arm where a shot was given. This happens very rarely.
- Any medication can cause a severe allergic reaction. Such reactions from a vaccine are very rare, estimated at about 1 in a million doses, and would happen within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

Interested in getting the HPV vaccine? Make an appointment by going online to [www.myuhc.umd.edu](http://www.myuhc.umd.edu), or call the health center at (301) 314-8180.