

HPV vaccination more likely if mothers approve

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College women were more likely to be vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV) if their mothers communicated with them about sex and if they thought their mothers would approve of their getting vaccinated, according to new Dartmouth research in the May issue of *Pediatrics* (published online April 12).

Meg Gerrard, PhD, of Dartmouth Medical School and Norris Cotton Cancer Center, Megan Roberts, a PhD student at Dartmouth College, and their colleagues, surveyed 972 female undergraduates at a large Midwestern university between November 2007 and April 2009. An anonymous questionnaire assessed the undergraduate's sexual-risk behavior, knowledge of HPV, perceptions of HPV risk, communication from their mothers about sex-related topics (including HPV), and their current [vaccination status](#).

Sixty-five percent of the women reported being sexually active, and 49% reported having received at least the first of the three-shot HPV [vaccine](#) series. Those who were unvaccinated were more likely to be interested in future vaccination if they thought their mothers would approve. The young women's perceptions of their risk of contracting HPV also contributed to their interest in getting vaccinated. Young women whose [mothers](#) had discussed values in relation to sex were, as a group, less interested in being vaccinated.

The authors concluded that "mother-daughter communication and approval of vaccination emerged as important predictors of young

women's HPV-vaccination behavior and intentions, even after the women were old enough to not require parental approval." They also noted that college-age women "are still a very important population to target for vaccination."

Provided by Dartmouth College

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