

# Video: Protecting kids from cancer with HPV vaccine

August 4 2023, by Deb Balzer

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Gardasil vaccine and box. Image: Wikipedia

As the back-to-school checklist grows, one detail that parents and caregivers should prioritize is ensuring all children have their appropriate vaccines.

Mayo Clinic's Dr. Kim Barbel Johnson says the HPV vaccine should be part of a routine vaccination schedule. It's a [preventive measure](#) that can save lives later.

"HPV causes a number of cancers. We think of it as causing [cervical](#)

[cancer](#) in women. But it also causes vulvar cancer, vaginal cancer, head and neck cancers," says Dr. Johnson. "There are about nine strains of this virus that we know causes a number of cancers."

It's the most common sexually transmitted infection in the world. "We have an opportunity to prevent our children from getting cancer down the road," she says.

The HPV vaccine is recommended for boys and girls ages 11 to 12. It can be started at age 9.

"We want to take advantage of every opportunity that we have prior to increasing exposure risk. And so the [recommendation](#) is that we start to vaccinate our boys and girls, somewhere between 11 and 12. It can be as early as 9," Dr. Johnson says.

The goal is to provide the vaccine before people are exposed to HPV. Dr. Johnson says the vaccine is safe and works.

"The data continues to prove that we are doing right by our children, and by [young adults](#), by vaccinating them," she says.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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