

## Sample School Nurse HPV Vaccine Q&A

### *Dear Parents:*

*There are several vaccines your pre-teen should have before school starts this year. I've received some questions from parents about the HPV vaccine, so I have answered some of the common questions here. Please feel free to contact me or your health provider if you have any other questions.*

### **Q: Why does my child need the HPV vaccine?**

**A:** The HPV vaccine is very important because it prevents cancer. I want your child to be protected against cancer, so I recommend you make an appointment to get your child vaccinated.

### **Q: Does my child still need the vaccine if he/she will wait for marriage?**

**A:** Yes, your child should still get vaccinated. HPV is so common that almost everyone will be infected at some point or another. When your child marries, she or he could still catch HPV from a spouse—they might have been infected before they ever crossed paths.

### **Q: Why now? Can this wait until my child is older?**

**A:** It's best to get your child vaccinated at the recommended ages of 11 or 12 years, and can begin as early as age 9. Adolescents have the strongest immune response, so it's the best choice to do it now rather than later.

### **Q: Do you think the HPV vaccine will be a green light for sexual activity?**

**A:** No, studies have shown that getting the HPV vaccine has absolutely no impact on sexual behavior. It doesn't make kids more likely to have sex, or to have sex at a younger age.

### **Q: Would you get your child vaccinated?**

**A:** Yes, I had my child (or grandchild, niece, friend's son, etc.) vaccinated because I think preventing cancer is very important.

### **Q: Are there any side effects to the vaccine?**

**A:** The HPV vaccine has been carefully studied by medical and scientific experts. The HPV vaccine has been shown to be very effective and very safe. Like other shots, most side effects are mild, primarily pain or redness in the arm. This should go away quickly, and the HPV vaccine has not been associated with any long-term side effects. Since 2006, about 135 million doses of the HPV vaccine has been distributed in the U.S. and over 280 million worldwide. In the years of HPV vaccine safety studies and monitoring, no serious safety concerns have been identified.

### **Q: Are there any possible effects on fertility?**

**A:** There is no data to suggest that getting the HPV vaccine will have an effect on future fertility. However, persistent HPV infection can cause cervical cancer and the treatment of cervical cancer can leave women unable to have children. Even treatment for cervical pre-cancer can put a woman at risk for problems with her cervix during pregnancy causing preterm delivery or problems.

I look forward to a fun and healthy school year with your child!

Sincerely,

*Your School Nurse, District #999*