

## The FACTS about the HPV vaccine



### **Why is the HPV vaccine important to protect your child?**

HPV (human papillomavirus) can cause cancers of the cervix, vagina and vulva in women, cancer of the penis in men, cancers of the anus and throat in men and women, as well as warts.

Currently about **4 out of 5 people** will have HPV at some point in their lives.

### **Does the HPV vaccine work?**

YES! The vaccine, when given at the recommended age, is **nearly 100% effective** at preventing cervical, vulvar and vaginal pre-cancers and genital warts caused by the types of HPV in the vaccines in women. They are 90% effective at preventing genital warts in general.

### **When should your child receive the HPV vaccine?**

We recommend that your child receive the HPV vaccine at age 11 or 12 years of age. It can be given as young as 9 years, and people can receive catch-up vaccines up until they are 26 years old.

Although your child will not be exposed to HPV until they are sexually active, it has been found that the vaccine works best when it is given at a younger age.

### **Is the HPV vaccine safe?**

YES. The vaccine was studied for years and tested on 29,000 volunteers for safety before it was approved by the FDA. Since 2006 over 86 million doses have been given with no more serious side effects than any other vaccine your child has received.

You may have heard that HPV has caused death or infertility – this is not correct. This myth is based on a misunderstanding of the science of how we study vaccines. When vaccines are studied, all events that take place after people receive the vaccine get reported to the CDC. *None of the 14 recorded deaths (out of the 29,000 initial volunteers) were found to be caused by the vaccine.* The vaccine has also not caused any fertility problems.

### **What are the side effects of the HPV vaccine?**

The most common side effects from the HPV vaccine, much like all other vaccines, are pain, swelling or redness in the arm where the shot was given, fainting, fever, headache or fatigue and muscle pain.

Serious allergic reactions to the vaccine are rare, and we monitor all children for 15 minutes after their first vaccine to make sure that they do not have signs of serious reaction. *Make sure to let us know if your child is allergic to yeast or latex.*

### **Will the vaccine encourage sexual activity?**

No. This has been studied, and there is no difference in the age of initial sexual activity in people who did and did not receive the vaccine. Additionally, having conversations early on about the risks of sex, as well as the importance of abstinence or safe sex to protect your child has been shown to actually delay the age kids start to have sexual experiences.