VACCINATIVE | Vaccination information for Natives by Natives

The Power of HPV Vaccines

HPV is a common infection that can cause six different types of cancers and genital warts. Many people with HPV don't know that they have the virus. The reason for this is that HPV can sometimes rest quietly in our bodies, without showing any symptoms. While it is resting, HPV can still cause damage. It can also be passed on to others. Thankfully, there are vaccines that can help protect everyone starting at age 9.

This handout is designed to help you understand the ins and outs of HPV and HPV vaccines so you can protect yourself, your family, and your community.

"HPV vaccines prevent six cancers, including cervical cancer. Known as a "silent killer," cervical cancer often causes no symptoms until it reaches a later stage. But cervical cancer, like other HPV-related cancers, is largely preventable. Getting vaccinated is the most powerful thing we can do to protect ourselves and our children."

– Torrie Eagle Staff, Mnicoujou/Oglala Lakota, Northern Arapaho, and Northern Cheyenne, Cancer Project Manager at the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board

How HPV Spreads

HPV spreads skin-to-skin. That means you can get HPV during vaginal, oral, and anal sex.

Prevent Spreading HPV By...

Getting vaccinated.

Using barriers during sex – like condoms and dental dams.

Getting regular health checkups.

"If you get HPV shots early, your body is in the best position to respond well and be maximally protected against HPV-related infections. Specifically, it decreases the chance of getting genital warts or HPV-related cancers by up to 99%."

– Dr. Amanda Bruegl, MD, Oneida Nation and Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians

HPV Vaccines

Depending on your age, you either need 2 or 3 shots to be protected. HPV vaccines are most effective if given during the preteen years when our immune system is strongest.

If you are an adult, even if you've had HPV, it's still a good idea to get vaccinated. Getting the latest vaccines will give you the most up-to-date protection against HPV.

Shot Effectiveness

The HPV vaccines work extremely well. Fewer teens and young adults are now getting genital warts, and HPV-related cancers are decreasing.

Plus, it's safe. Over 57 million HPV shots have been given, with zero serious safety concerns.

Where to Get Vaccinated

To get vaccinated contact your local Tribal clinic, IHS facility, or visit a local pharmacy or clinic.

Most side effects are mild and go away within a few days. Mild side effects are a good sign that your body is preparing to fight HPV. Side effects are not a sign of illness.

Shot Side Effects

The vaccine is safe. However, you may experience side effects.

The most common side effects include:

- Fever and nausea
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Soreness, redness, or swelling where you got the shot

VacciNative

This handout was developed by VacciNative – a project dedicated to creating accurate vaccine information for Native people by Native people. We do this by gathering info from trusted Elders, Native health professionals, and other experts.

All of our materials are reviewed by the VacciNative Alliance, a collaboration of staff from Tribal Epidemiology Centers across the nation.

Additional Information

For additional information, check out www.IndianCountryECHO.org/VacciNative.
For questions, contact us at VacciNative@npaihb.org.

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