Indiana State Department of Health
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Dear Parent or Guardian:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the human papillomavirus (HPV) causes more than 26,000 new cases of cancer in U.S. men and women each year, including cervical and oral cancers. Many of these cancers can be prevented with a safe, effective vaccine that is available to boys and girls starting at age 11. Indiana Code 20-34-4-3 requires that the Indiana State Department of Health make you aware of HPV, its link to cancer, and the available vaccine.

The CDC has stated that, based on recent studies, HPV is so common that nearly all sexually active people will get it during their lifetime.[1] That is why it's important to vaccinate children before they could be exposed to the virus. According to the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians and the American College of Physicians, all boys and girls ages 11 or 12 should get vaccinated.[2 3] Although older teens and young adults can receive the vaccine through age 26, studies have shown that the vaccine produces a better immune response at earlier ages.

The HPV vaccine offers long-lasting protection against nine types of HPV and has proven to be effective in preventing numerous types of cancers, including cervical and oral pharyngeal cancers. It also protects against genital warts. The vaccine can be given at the same time as other recommended vaccines and is administered in a two- or three-dose series, depending on the age of the patient when the series is initiated. It is important to complete the series.

These vaccines have been studied carefully for safety. As with any vaccine, preteens and teens should sit or lie down for about 15 minutes after receiving the HPV vaccine to protect against fainting.

While HPV is not a required immunization in Indiana, it is one of the few tools available to prevent cancer. We urge you to discuss the vaccine with your child's healthcare provider. Questions may be directed to the Indiana State Department of Health Immunization Program at (800) 701-0704.

For more information on HPV and the vaccine, please visit:
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) HPV website: http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/default.htm
CDC HPV Vaccine Website: http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/
Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) HPV Website: http://www.vaccineinformation.org/hpv/

Yours in Health,

The Indiana State Department of Health Immunization Division

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[1] http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/whatishpv.html
[2] http://www.cdc.gov/std/HPV/STDFact-HPV.html
[3] https://www2.aap.org/immunization/illnesses/hpv/hpv.html