



# Grandparents Corner

*January 2014 - Cervical Health Awareness Month*

Cervical Health Awareness Month is a chance to raise awareness about how women can protect themselves from HPV (human papillomavirus) and cervical cancer.

About 20 million Americans currently have HPV, the most common sexually transmitted disease. HPV is a major cause of cervical cancer.

The good news!

- HPV can be prevented with the HPV vaccine.
- Cervical cancer can often be prevented with regular screening tests (pap tests and follow-up care).

The Disease: Human Papillomavirus is a very common virus that is spread by skin-to-skin contact during any type of sexual activity with another person. HPV is common in people in their teens and early twenties.

Each year in the United States, about 19,000 cancers are caused by HPV in women and cervical cancer is the most common. About 8,000 cancers caused by HPV occur each year in men in the United States.

## **The Vaccine: HPV - Both Boys and Girls Can Have the HPV Vaccine**

HPV vaccines protect against Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection and the diseases that cause HPV. HPV vaccinations are recommended for preteen girls and boys at age 11 or 12. If a teenager or young adult (age 13 through 26 years old) has not had any or all of the HPV shots when they were younger, they should ask their doctor about having them now.

Preteens and teens should have all three (3) doses of an HPV vaccine long before their first sexual contact so that they have time to develop protection from the vaccine. This is also the age when the vaccine will work the best since preteens have a better immune response from the vaccine than older teens. These shots are given over six (6) months after the first shot. For the best protection, it is very important to have all of the shots long before sexual activity begins.

There are two different HPV vaccines (Cervarix or Gardasil) that can be given to girls and young women. Only one HPV vaccine (Gardasil) can be given to boys and young men. Both of these vaccines protect against HPV types that cause most cervical cancer and have been shown to prevent cervical cancer.

*Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) and [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)*

## QUICK QUIZ

*More than half of all people in the United States don't see a dentist for regular dental care, with the main reason being a fear of dentists. The more a person avoids the dentist office, the more problems are likely to develop and the more extensive - and expensive - any dental work will be. Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.*

1. *What's unhealthy for your body is also unhealthy for your mouth.    T    F*
2. *The foods you eat and the way you clean your teeth are the two most important factors influencing whether or not you have cavities.    T    F*
3. *Eating hot or cold foods do not cause tooth pain.    T    F*
4. *Smoking and diabetes do not cause gum disease.    T    F*
5. *Dental hygiene can cause anxiety in some elderly people.    T    F*
6. *The first sign of gum trouble is red, swollen gums or gums that bleed after brushing.    T    F*
7. *A broken or loose tooth can be a choking hazard.    T    F*
8. *Good oral hygiene can be a challenge for individuals with Alzheimer's or dementia because of the person's inability to understand and accept help.    T    F*
9. *When we eat foods that are high in sugar – as well as starchy foods that are broken down into sugar – the bacteria in your mouth can change those sugars into acids that slowly eat away at the enamel, causing a hole in your tooth.    T    F*
10. *Older adults can develop tooth decay, particularly if they have receding gums or if they have old fillings that develop cracks and crevices where new cavities can form.    T    F*

**KEY:** 1. T 2. T 3. F 4. F 5. T 6. T 7. T 8. T 9. T 10. T