



July 23, 2025

Dear Colleague,

As health care providers, we can have a direct impact on reducing the burden of cancer through increased use of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. HPV vaccination has the potential to [prevent more than 90% of the cancers caused by HPV](#). In 2023, the New York State (NYS) Department of Health and the New York City (NYC) Health Department endorsed the national **Start at 9** campaign to recommend starting HPV vaccination at age 9 years.

Getting the HPV vaccine series is the best protection against preventable cancers caused by HPV infection and [research](#) shows that your HPV vaccine recommendation has a strong impact on vaccine acceptance among your patients and parents of patients. If we can achieve higher levels of on-time HPV vaccination (between ages 9 and 12 years), we can **decrease the burden of HPV-related cancers**. With updates to our NYS and NYC immunization registries, we have systems in place to support the Start at 9 campaign and improve HPV vaccine coverage.

Starting HPV vaccination at age 9 years is [recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics](#), the American Academy of Family Practice, the American Cancer Society, and [over 50 organizations across New York State](#). This endorsement acknowledges the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved indication of vaccination at age 9 years and older.

Changes to the New York State and New York City Immunization Registries

To assist vaccinating health care providers to recommend and provide the HPV vaccine starting at age 9 years, the vaccine forecasting schedule in the NYS Immunization Information System (NYSIIS) and the NYC Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) has been updated. The earliest recommended age in both systems was changed from 11 to 9 years, so beginning at age 9 years, forecasting will indicate that the patient is “Due Now” for their HPV vaccine.

Benefits of Beginning HPV Vaccination at Age 9 Years

Studies show that two doses given six months apart to those ages 9 to 14 years produced [an immune response as great as or better](#) than three doses given to older adolescents and young adults. According to more than 10 years of post-licensure vaccine monitoring in the United States and other countries, and numerous clinical trials, HPV vaccines administered to children ages 9 years and older are [safe](#). Using the routine 9-year-old visit to begin administering the HPV vaccine can facilitate initiation of the two-dose series and provide more opportunities to complete the series by age 13 years.

HPV Vaccination Rates

Gaps remain between HPV and other adolescent vaccination rates, and on-time series completion for HPV vaccination is especially low. Even though the HPV vaccine can prevent many cancers, the percentage of 13-year-old adolescents in NYS with a complete HPV vaccine series is only 25.7% (NYS Department of Health, unpublished data, based on NYSIIS and CIR).

Burden of HPV-Related Cancers in New York State

In [NYS](#), nearly 2,900 people are diagnosed with an HPV-related cancer each year, with about 58% of cases in females and 42% in males. Cancers caused by HPV include cancers of the cervix, oropharynx, vagina, vulva, penis, and anus. Cervical cancer is the most diagnosed HPV-related cancer

in females, and oropharyngeal cancer is the most common in males. Non-Hispanic White males have the highest incidence of oropharyngeal cancer compared to other males. For all HPV-related cancers combined, incidence rates among both non-Hispanic White females and males rose significantly from 2007 through 2021 by 0.7% and 1.5% per year, respectively, while incidence rates for non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic people decreased significantly. Despite these decreases, Black non-Hispanic people had the highest rate of all HPV-related cancers combined among females in NYS, primarily because of higher rates of cervical cancer. These health outcomes are likely due to systemic racism and structural inequities, such as access to healthcare and socioeconomic factors.

Dosing Schedule

When the HPV vaccine is administered between the ages of 9 and 14 years, only two doses, given at least 6 months apart, are needed to complete the series. If the HPV vaccine series is started at age 15 years or older or is given to those ages 9 to 26 years with a weakened immune system, three doses are needed for full protection. Catch-up vaccination through age 26 years is recommended for all people not yet adequately vaccinated. Shared clinical decision-making is recommended for unvaccinated adults ages 27 to 45 years.

Your voice matters. Your strong HPV vaccine recommendation starting at age 9 years is one of the best ways to improve vaccination rates and, ultimately, protect future generations from HPV-related cancers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. McDonald MD MPH".

James V. McDonald, MD, MPH
Commissioner, New York State
Department of Health

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Morse".

Michelle Morse, MD, MPH
Acting Commissioner, New York City
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene