



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH News Release

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Getting your child vaccinated over summer break? Don't forget HPV *Vaccine helps prevent cancer but remains underutilized in Maryland*

Baltimore, MD (June 14, 2016) – Maryland's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is encouraging parents and providers to use every child's visit to the doctor – such as an annual checkup or physicals for sports, camp or for other school-required immunizations – to discuss vaccination for human papillomavirus (HPV) and to initiate or complete the series of three shots over six months.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI). HPV is so common that nearly all sexually active men and women get it at some point in their lives. There are many different types of HPV. Some types can cause health problems including genital warts and cancers. But there are vaccines that can prevent such health problems. The HPV vaccine is recommended for preteen boys and girls at age 11 or 12 because it produces a more robust immune response during the preteen years, and to provide protection before exposure to the virus.

“The HPV vaccine has been proven effective at preventing various forms of cancer,” said Dr. Howard Haft, Health and Mental Hygiene's Deputy Secretary of Public Health Services, “but we know that access and utilization of the vaccine in Maryland has been insufficient. We want parents and providers alike to think HPV when discussing routine vaccinations. The high coverage rates for other vaccines show us it is certainly possible to see similar utilization of the HPV vaccine.”

While Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis), meningococcal and HPV vaccines are routinely recommended for adolescents, Maryland data show more than 40 percent higher vaccination rates for Tdap (85 percent) and meningococcal (87 percent) disease than for HPV, despite its safety and efficacy in preventing HPV-related cancers. Only about [39 percent of adolescent girls and 25 percent of adolescent boys](#) in Maryland received three doses of HPV vaccine in 2014. These gaps in coverage indicate missed opportunities to vaccinate boys and girls with HPV vaccine at the same time as other routinely recommended adolescent vaccines like Tdap and meningococcal vaccines.

For back-to-school immunization information, visit Health and Mental Hygiene at <http://goo.gl/m8WLeF>.

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The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is the State agency that protects Maryland's public health. We work together to promote and improve the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care, quality management, and community engagement. Stay connected: www.twitter.com/MarylandDHMH and www.facebook.com/MarylandDHMH.