

# Preteen girls should get HPV vaccine

## Your Turn

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Guest columnist

Parents oftentimes do not think about the importance of vaccinations in their preteen child, as it relates to life-threatening illnesses they may contract as an adolescent or adult.

For your 11-to-12-year-old, this means vaccines to protect against flu, Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough), meningitis and the human papillomavirus (HPV).

Vaccinating your child against HPV is protecting him or her from several cancers later in life. HPV causes nearly all cervical cancers and is linked to other cancer types in men and women, including the mouth and throat. The vaccine could prevent more than 90% of these cancers from ever developing.

Studies have shown that since the HPV vaccine was introduced more than 10 years ago, infections with the types of HPV that cause cancers and genital warts have

dropped 71% among teen girls, and fewer women are developing the abnormal cells that lead to cervical cancer.

But with only about 60% of females and 50% of males in New York state completing the two-dose vaccine series as recommended, vaccination rates aren't where they could be.

The NYS Cancer Prevention in Action Program (CPiA) in Broome County is working to educate teens, parents and health care providers about the importance of HPV vaccination for cancer prevention.

CPiA is not alone. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the National Association for School Nurses all agree that your preteen needs the HPV vaccine and that it should be given in the same way and on the same day as all adolescent vaccines.

Schedule an appointment with your health care provider today for your child to receive all the vaccines they need for the best protection.

*Dr. Mary DeGuardi is a Binghamton resident.*