

ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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May 11, 2015

Dear Parent or Guardian of Sixth Grade Students:

As a parent, there is nothing more important than safeguarding your child's health. We would like to share information with you about human papillomavirus (HPV). Know the facts about HPV and the vaccine available and how to protect your child.

What is HPV?

HPV is a common virus. Most people exposed to HPV will never develop health issues. But for others, HPV can cause major health problems, including cervical, anal, and throat cancer in both men and women. Other types of HPV can cause genital warts in both males and females. Most infected people have no symptoms and may spread the virus without knowing it. HPV spreads mainly through sexual contact.

How can I protect my child from HPV?

Make sure your child gets the HPV vaccine. The vaccine is highly effective and can prevent infection from some of the most common and serious types of HPV that cause cancer and genital warts. The vaccine does not get rid of existing HPV infections.

Who should get the vaccine and when should they get it?

Three doses of HPV vaccine are recommended for all boys and girls starting at ages 11 to 12. Health experts recommend this vaccine for females up to age 26 and for males up to age 21. In addition to HPV vaccine, your 11 to 12 year-old should receive Tdap and Meningitis (meningococcal) vaccines.

Where can I find the HPV vaccine?

Ask your doctor, nurse, or local health department to find out more about HPV vaccine and where you can get it. New York State Vaccine for Children Program provides all recommended vaccines at no cost for kids through age 18, available from providers across the state. Providers may charge an office visit fee to give the vaccine.

For more information on HPV, the vaccine, and cervical cancer:

- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/
- American Cancer Society
www.cancer.org

Sincerely,

Sandra Pejic, RN BSN
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