You don't have to have sex to catch HPV, but sex increases your risk. You can get HPV by skin-to-skin intimate contact. People can get and spread HPV without knowing it. It's best to get vaccinated before you ever have sex.

**What is HPV?**
HPV stands for human papillomavirus, which is a very common virus that can lead to:
- Cancers of the mouth and throat
- Cancer of the cervix
- Cancer of the penis, vagina, vulva, or anus
- Genital warts

**The HPV vaccine can prevent these!**

**Do I really need the HPV vaccine? YES!**
You should get the HPV vaccine because it can prevent some types of cancers and genital warts.

**Is the HPV vaccine safe? YES!**
- Millions of doses of HPV have been given without any problem.
- You may get a sore arm.
- Occasionally, a few people faint, so sit for 15 minutes after getting the shot.

**Should I get the HPV vaccine if I haven't had sex yet? YES!**
- You don't have to have sex to catch HPV, but sex increases your risk.
- You can get HPV by skin-to-skin intimate contact.
- People can get and spread HPV without knowing it.
- It's best to get vaccinated before you ever have sex.

**Should I get the HPV vaccine if I've already had sex? YES!**
You still need to get vaccinated even if you have had sex. The vaccine provides a lot of protection.

**When should I get the HPV vaccine?**
- **First dose**: between 9 and 11 years of age.
- **Second dose**: 6 months after the first dose.

**Why do I need more than one shot?**
You need a series of HPV vaccine shots to be fully protected.

**Why is the HPV vaccine given at an early age?**
- The HPV vaccine works much better during the preteen years rather than if given later.
- Preteens who are vaccinated earlier only need two shots instead of three.
- The HPV vaccine protects children long before they are ever exposed to the virus.