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Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus that can cause serious cancers later in life. It is estimated that HPV causes about 37,000 cases of cancer in men and women every year in the U.S. HPV vaccination can prevent over 90% of cancers caused by HPV. HPV vaccines are safe, and scientific research shows that the benefits of HPV vaccination far outweigh the potential risks. Similar to other vaccines, common side effects are mild, like pain or redness where the shot was given, and get better within a day or two.

Because it is safe and effective, vaccination against HPV is recommended by the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians. It's also recommended by the American Cancer Society and California's Cancer Prevention Act.

HPV vaccine is more effective when given at younger ages. All children between the ages of 9 to 12 years are recommended to receive two doses of HPV vaccine, with the second dose given before the start of 8th grade. Kids who wait until later to get their first dose of HPV vaccine may need three doses. The HPV vaccine is often given at the same time as whooping cough and bacterial meningitis vaccines for adolescents. Ask your school nurse, health care provider or local health department to learn more about HPV vaccine and where your child can get vaccinated.

For questions, please contact District Nursing Services at (213) 202-7580.