

# PATH → to prevention

## Preventing HPV Cancers with Rural Communities

The U.S. encompasses many geographic regions, cultural traditions and health care norms. **About 20% of the population lives in rural regions of the country**, which accounts for approximately 50 million Americans.






**Americans living in rural areas possess numerous strengths**, such as resiliency, self-sufficiency and a strong sense of community. And yet these same strengths can make many of these individuals less likely to seek preventive medical care, including cancer screening and HPV vaccination.

**HPV is an extremely common virus that can cause six forms of cancer in adults** – including cervical, vaginal, vulvar, anal, penile and oral/throat cancers. **HPV vaccination has been proven to prevent 90% of those cancers.** Healthy People 2030 goals aim for an 80% HPV vaccine completion rate. Unfortunately, people living in rural areas have higher rates of HPV cancers and have lower HPV vaccination coverage as compared to their urban counterparts. We want to change that.

**HPV vaccination is cancer prevention.**

### BARRIERS TO VACCINATION IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Barriers in rural communities that lead to a lack of awareness about the safety and effectiveness of HPV vaccination include:

-  **Low levels of HPV vaccination knowledge, especially among parents and caregivers**
-  **Lower overall childhood vaccination rates**
-  **Health care provider shortages, limiting access to vaccinations**
-  **Lack of health care provider recommendations for vaccinations**
-  **Lack of transportation and access to health care facilities**



## EQUIP YOURSELF AND YOUR COMMUNITY WITH THE FACTS

**FACT: HPV vaccination is most effective between ages 9 and 12**

HPV vaccination provides the most protection when given before a child's 13th birthday. Ongoing studies (and safety testing) continue to show the importance of on-time vaccination within this age range. But it's not too late to get vaccinated for those over age 12. Speak with a health care provider to learn what's right for you or your child.

**FACT: HPV vaccination is widely covered and available at low or no cost**

All major insurance plans (including almost every plan in the U.S.) cover HPV vaccination. The federal Vaccines for Children program may also provide coverage at no cost for those who qualify.

**FACT: Pediatricians, primary care providers and health care professionals recommend HPV vaccination**

HPV vaccination has been routinely recommended since 2006 in the U.S. Adolescents can get vaccinated at health care providers' offices, local clinics and health departments, and some pharmacies. HPV vaccination can be given at the same time as other recommended vaccinations.

**FACT: HPV vaccination prevents HPV and HPV cancers for both girls and boys**

HPV can infect, be carried by and cause symptoms in everyone. The virus can also cause HPV cancers in everyone – including cervical, vaginal, vulvar, anal, penile and oral/throat cancers.

## HOW TO PREVENT HPV AND HPV CANCERS

1. Get vaccinated against HPV: If you or your child is in the recommended age range, get vaccinated.
2. Encourage others to get vaccinated: Normalize HPV vaccination as a tool for cancer prevention.
3. Share the facts: HPV vaccination is safe, effective, and durable. It prevents six types of cancer.

Want to learn more? Talk with your child's doctor or another trusted, reliable source of medical information, and visit [stjude.org/hpv](https://stjude.org/hpv).

HPV vaccination is a tool for cancer prevention and offers protection against HPV cancers for a lifetime.



## HPV Cancer Prevention Program

**Learn more.**

Visit [stjude.org/hpv](https://stjude.org/hpv) or email [preventhpv@stjude.org](mailto:preventhpv@stjude.org)