

Pharmacists: Let's Talk About HPV



Let's Talk about HPV

What is HPV?

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a sexually transmitted viral infection that is virtually ubiquitous in America. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection; it is estimated that nearly all sexually active men and women will get the virus at some point in their lives. Over 14 million people in the United States will become newly infected with HPV this year alone.

How is HPV spread?

HPV is spread through intimate skin-to-skin contact, most commonly by intercourse or genital skin-to-skin contact, but also by oral sex and other intimate contact. Because HPV is virulent, it is easily spread and typically presents with no symptoms. However, not all HPV infections are harmful or even symptomatic in patients. The body's immune system naturally clears HPV in about 2 years in 90% of cases, but persistent infection by certain types of the virus can lead to serious problems such as genital warts or certain types of cancers.

What health problems are associated with HPV?

The two most common HPV-associated health issues are genital warts and cancer. Typically, the type of associated health issues present in patients depend on the strain of the virus that infects the host. Out of the more than 40 HPV types that can infect the genital tract, there are four types that are the most concerning. HPV types 6 and 11 are to blame in about 90% of genital warts cases worldwide, while types 16 and 18 are responsible for more than 70% of cervical cancers.

Cervical cancer is the most prevalent cancer to arise from HPV for women and throat cancer is the most prevalent cancer to arise from HPV for men. HPV can also cause cancers of the vagina, vulva, penis, anus, and even the back of the throat.

Why is this important to pharmacists?

According to the America's Health rankings 2016 Health of Women and Children Report, Arkansas ranks 47th and 49th out of 50 states in HPV vaccination for females and males ages 13 to 17 respectively. The good news is that pharmacists can help! With authority granted by the Arkansas State Board of Pharmacy, Arkansas pharmacists may offer vaccines to children, adolescents and adults age 7 and over.

Let's Talk about the HPV Vaccine!

Who is recommended to get the HPV vaccine?

In December of 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released an updated HPV vaccination schedule via their Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). The HPV vaccination schedule update was guided by ACIP; they reviewed clinical trials comparing the two and three dose series from November 2015 to October 2016 and determined that the immunogenicity of the three dose vaccine series was non-inferior to the two dose vaccine series for persons aged 9 through 14 years of age and there was similar efficacy and effectiveness between the two vaccine series options (Meites, Kempe, Markowitz, 2016).

The updated schedule for persons aged 9 through 14 years of age is as follows:

- ACIP recommends that the HPV vaccine series be initiated at 11 or 12 years of age, but can be given as early as 9 years of age.
- **For patients initiating the vaccine series before the age of 15 years old, they are recommended to receive 2 doses of the HPV vaccine, with the second dose received 6 to 12 months after the initial dose.**
- If a patient received their first dose of the HPV vaccine prior to their 15th birthday AND the ACIP updated recommendations, only one additional dose is necessary (i.e. two doses total).

The schedule for persons over the age of 15 years of age is as follows:

- Patients over the age of 15 years old and special patient populations are still recommended to receive 3 doses of the HPV vaccine.
- For information on vaccination for immunocompromised and special needs populations, view the CDC Adult Immunization Schedule and Toolkit.

Helpful information for pharmacists about the HPV vaccine:

- Duration of vaccine protection - it is suspected that immunity to HPV after receiving the vaccine is lifelong for both the 2 and 3-dose series.
- If the patient's vaccination series was interrupted, the series does not need to be restarted. The number of their total doses depends on the age of their initial dose of the series.
- Consider downloading the CDC Immunization Application on your smart phone – the App houses the updated CDC vaccination schedule for both children/adolescents and adults.
- The HPV vaccine is one of twelve vaccines covered under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (National VICP). For more information visit <https://www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation/>.

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Who is not recommended to get the HPV vaccine?

- Anyone who has had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine.
- Anyone who has a life-threatening allergy to any ingredient in the vaccine.

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes, the CDC and FDA have reviewed the safety information for the HPV vaccine, and it has been shown to be safe.

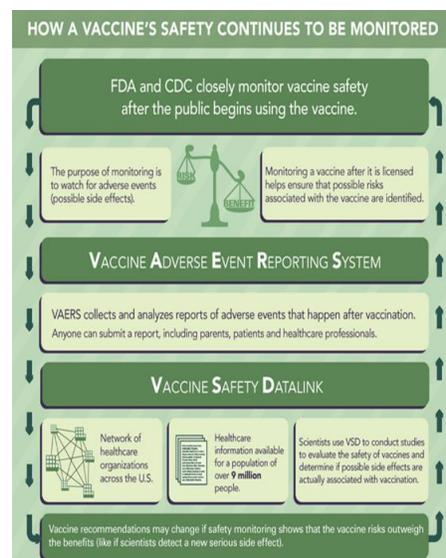
Does the vaccine have side effects?

The most common side effects of the HPV vaccine are:

- Pain, redness, or swelling in the arm where the shot was given
- Fever
- Headache or feeling tired
- Fainting after a shot is common in some teenagers, but it can happen to adults, too. To minimize fainting risk, have patients sit down for 15 minutes after the getting the HPV vaccine.

If you, as a provider, encounter any uncommon side effects, report them to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). For more information on the VAERS visit <https://vaers.hhs.gov/index>.

Reminder: Always give patients or parents of the patient the most current edition of the CDC Vaccine Information Sheet (VIS). All VISs can be found on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/current-vis.html>.



How can Arkansas Pharmacists offer the HPV Vaccine?

Pharmacist Roles:

Pharmacists can better coordinate care by communicating information on vaccines administered in pharmacies outside the primary care clinic setting (pediatrician, family physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant) to the patient's primary care provider. At a minimum the vaccine name, dose, route and date of administration should be relayed. The pharmacist and pharmacy team should inquire about the date of their most recent well-child visit should screen adolescents and children while obtaining the patient history. Patients without a primary care provider should be assisted with identifying one and scheduling a visit. For adolescents and children who are eligible for HPV vaccination, well-child visits should be completed annually. Pharmacists should educate, counsel, and consider formalized referrals to assist patients and parents with scheduling well-child visits that are overdue.

Children and Adolescents:

- Age 9 to 17 – a patient specific prescription for the HPV vaccine and administration (verbal, paper, electronic prescription, faxed prescription).
- Age 9 to 17 – Arkansas State Board of Pharmacy Regulation 9-01 Disease state Management protocol between a specific physician and a specific Arkansas disease state management credentialed pharmacist for patients that have a patient- physician established relationship with the physician that signed the protocol.

Note: An Arkansas physician-pharmacist generalized immunization protocol is not allowed to be used for vaccines in children, except for influenza, for ages 7 to 17. Currently, Arkansas pharmacists are not allowed to administer immunizations under any circumstances to children age 6 years old and younger.

Adults:

- Age 18 to 26 - a patient specific prescription for the HPV vaccine and administration (verbal, paper, electronic prescription, faxed prescription).
- Age 18 to 26 - A generalized immunization protocol that authorizes HPV immunization.

Immunization Coverage in Arkansas Pharmacies by Selected Health Plans

Diagnosis and billing codes:

- Billing CPT code 90649 (Gardasil®)
- ICD 10 - Z23 for all vaccination diagnoses

Health plans and expected HPV vaccine coverage in pharmacies:

- **State Employees and Public School Teachers:** HPV coverage in pharmacies
- **Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) private plans:** expected coverage in pharmacies for most plans
- **Arkansas Health Exchange Plans including Arkansas Works (Ambetter of Arkansas, Arkansas BCBS, QualChoice Arkansas):** expected coverage in pharmacies for most plans
- **Medicare part B** (very few eligible patients are age 26 or younger): HPV vaccine is not covered
- **Medicare part D** (very few eligible patients are age 26 or younger): HPV vaccine is usually not covered
- **Medicare Advantage** (very few eligible patients are age 26 or younger): HPV vaccine is usually not covered
- **Arkansas Medicaid age 19 and over:** HPV vaccine is not currently covered
- **Arkansas Medicaid Age 7 to 18:** Coverage of HPV vaccine is through the Arkansas Medicaid and Arkansas Department of Health Vaccine for Children (VFC) Program or ARKids-B SCHIP Vaccine program.

Vaccines for Children and Arkansas Pharmacies

VFC Background:

The purpose of the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program is to improve vaccine availability by providing ACIP recommended vaccines at no cost to eligible children who might not otherwise be vaccinated due to an inability to pay.

Children are eligible to receive free vaccines through the VFC program if they are Medicaid-eligible, uninsured, underinsured (insurance does not cover the cost of immunizations), or American Indian or Alaskan Native ethnicity. In Arkansas, the program is administered by the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH). The ADH distributes vaccine and provides technical support for best practices and workflows to eligible VFC providers. Arkansas Medicaid provides reimbursement opportunities to eligible VFC and ARKids-B SCHIP providers for vaccine administration.

VFC vaccine reimbursement:

The Arkansas Medicaid Program will reimburse pharmacies the administration fee for selected vaccines that are obtained through VFC or ARKids-B SCHIP Vaccine program. Providers may not bill for the cost of the VFC vaccine – this could be considered fraud and abuse. The vaccine administration fee is per vaccine and providers must accept the reimbursement for immunization administration set by the state Medicaid agency or the contracted Medicaid health plans for Medicaid VFC-eligible children.

For more information on billing information, refer to section 292.950 of the Physician manual for VFC vaccines billing procedures and section 262.430 for ARKids-B SCHIP vaccine. All Arkansas State Board of Pharmacy laws and regulations will apply.

For additional content on the Arkansas VFC program, visit:
<http://www.immunizear.com/vfc>.

Vaccines for Children and Arkansas Pharmacies

VFC eligibility:

To be eligible for participation, the pharmacy must meet the following criteria, in addition to those specified in Arkansas Medicaid Provider Manual, Section 201.000:

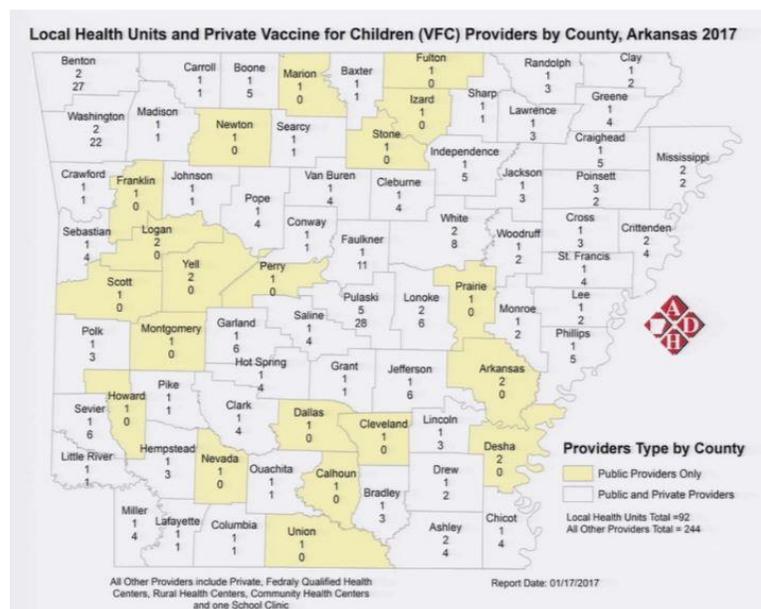
- Complete Section III, Item 22, of the enrollment application (view or print Provider Enrollment application material) if the pharmacist is certified to administer the influenza virus and pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccines and
- Pharmacies must be enrolled in the Title XVIII (Medicare) Program to administer the vaccines listed above.

Refer to Section 210.100 for scope of coverage; Section 213.000 for benefit limits.

Refer to <https://www.medicaid.state.ar.us>. Click on Provider / Provider Manuals / Physician to access the online Arkansas Provider Manuals and fee schedules. Currently the immunization administration fees in VFC and ARKids-B SCHIP are covered and billed as EP/TJ modifier codes at a rate of \$9.56 administration fee per vaccine.

Why should you enroll to be a VFC provider?

There are currently 20 counties in Arkansas that do not have VFC providers outside of ADH local health units. Pharmacists have the potential to fill in gaps in immunization coverage in those counties and improve immunization rates in Arkansas – specifically by providing strong recommendations for appropriate ACIP vaccines.



Arkansas Pharmacies and WebIZ

Arkansas WebIZ

The Arkansas WebIZ system is the statewide immunization registry and is administered by the Arkansas Department of Health. The mission of the Arkansas Immunization Information System and registry is to utilize information management technology as the basis for an information system capable of improving Arkansans' immunization documentation and increasing the immunization rates of Arkansans, in order to prevent and/or reduce the morbidity and mortality from vaccine preventable disease.

Arkansas state law **REQUIRES** that all immunizations administered to patients 21 years of age and younger must be reported to the state's immunization registry WebIZ. If you were to enroll as a VFC vaccine provider, inputting vaccine data into WebIZ would be required. Despite the law, it is best practice to report all immunizations for all ages into the state's immunization registry WebIZ. For example, those pharmacists who collaborate with Dr. Jennifer Dillaha at the Arkansas Department of Health and her immunization protocol are required to report all vaccines into WebIZ regardless of age. In addition, Arkansas CPESN (Community Pharmacy Enhanced Services Network) has a requirement in their participation agreement to report all vaccines to WebIZ for all ages. This best practice will ensure better care coordination with immunizations for Arkansans.

Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition Working for You!

Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition (AIAC)

The Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition (AIAC) is exploring options with the Arkansas Department of Health and other adolescent immunization stakeholders to help remedy that so that pharmacists can collaborate with physicians and other prescribers in their area to potentially give the second or third dose of the series. Adolescents age 11 to 18 typically receive one well-child visit per year at the doctor, making administration of dose number 2 and 3 according to the CDC/ACIP schedule challenging to provide for some pediatric or family practice clinic settings. The intent for pharmacist involvement in the delivery of the HPV vaccine is to increase successful completion of the 2 or 3-dose series, as we are more accessible to patients, especially in rural Arkansas.

For more information on the Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition and resources for the HPV vaccine visit <http://www.immunizear.org>.

References and Resources:

Meites E, Kempe A, Markowitz LE. [Use of a 2-Dose Schedule for Human Papillomavirus Vaccination — Updated Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#) *MMWR*. 2016;65(49);1405-8.

<http://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/2016-health-of-women-and-children-report/measure/Immunize HPVmale MCH/state/AR>.

<https://www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/current-vis.html>

<http://www.immunizear.com/vfc>



Questions about the HPV vaccine?

For more information:

**Arkansas Immunization
Action Coalition 417 S.
Victory Street
Little Rock, AR 72201-2923
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