

HPV Immunization: Increase Your Stats in Preventing Cancer! - Frankly Speaking EP 21

Transcript Details

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Dr. Frank Domino

You are seeing Olivia today for her sports physical. She's a 13-year-old, who's very healthy. When you saw her last, you recommended the HPV vaccine, but her mother was resistant, worried that it might cause problems or might make her sexually active. Olivia spoke to the school nurse and wonders why her mom keeps saying no to the vaccine. She's here today. You see this is a great opportunity to discuss the HPV vaccine with her. Joining me today is Jill Terrien, Director of the Nurse Practitioner's Program here at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Thank you for coming, Jill.

Jill Terrien:

Thank you, Frank.

Dr. Domino:

Well, the HPV vaccine's been around for a while. Can you tell us what's changed in the last year, regarding it's dosing?

Jill Terrien:

Sure. The vaccine's been around about a decade, and last October, the CDC came out with a recommendation that girls under the age of 15 receive two doses of vaccine, rather than three. And the important fact here is, is that compliance, and completing the series would be very

important. It seems that you could get two doses done, if you were having trouble completing the series.

Dr. Domino:

That's terrific news. So the study found that using the two was just as efficacious in preventing HPV as three?

Jill Terrien:

Yes. What they looked at was immunogenicity of the actual vaccine. There was a study that was done in Canada and they actually randomized girls under the age of 15 to two doses of the vaccine versus three. They also had a comparison group of people that were over the age of 15. And what they did is, they drew titers on them, and measured the antibody, or the sero-positivity in the blood. What they found, in both groups... The groups under the age of 15, that had the two doses versus the three doses, had efficacious rates of having the vaccine be seropositive in their bloodstream. So what that meant is, they were both just as protected. What they did find, over the age of 15 in those participants, is that they were less seropositive, so less protection.

Dr. Domino:

Great. It looks like from nine to 15, two doses given six months apart, is probably the way to go.

Jill Terrien:

Yes, and that is the recommendation, not only by the CDC, but also by other national groups.

Dr. Domino:

Great. And then over age 15, what should our dosing schedule be?

Jill Terrien:

The dosing schedule over the age of 15 still recommends the three doses. So time zero, then the second dose between one and two months, and then the third dose between six and 12 months.

Dr. Domino:

Great. What are the current CDC recommendations, regarding the HPV vaccine now?

Jill Terrien:

The current recommendations are that girls should start around the age of 11 to 12, to receive two doses of the vaccine. You can start as young as nine. They do have that leeway. So that's two doses. And then after the age of 15, three doses at the zero, one to two months, and six to 12 months time.

Dr. Domino:

I think Olivia's mom has a number of concerns, possibly about the safety of the vaccine, and possibly what giving the vaccine might say to her daughter, with regards to promiscuity. Can you address that at all?

Jill Terrien:

Absolutely. I think that when we talk about teens and sexual behavior, it's a hot topic. Nobody wants to see their teen daughter begin having sexual relations, until they're older, in a relationship, and in a safe way. And there is no correlation of HPV vaccine being given to young girls, and an increase in sexual behavior.

Dr. Domino:

Great. How about any other adverse effects? I know there's a number of internet stories going on about the HPV vaccine causing other problems. Any truth to that?

Jill Terrien:

Not really, the evidence is not there. But the number one, is a local reaction at the site of the injection, which you would get from many vaccines. I will say that, over time, we have seen vaccines change into the number of viruses that it covers. So we started out with a 2-valent vaccine, then it went to a 4-valent vaccine, and the current recommendation is to use the 9-

valent vaccine. The message there is that the two types that are cancer causing, particularly cervical cancer, are types 16 and 18, and all three of those vaccines have those types in it.

Dr. Domino:

So then what does the added 9-valent vaccine also cover?

Jill Terrien:

What they have found, is that it covers more cancers and more diseases, in particular, anogenital warts, also head and neck cancers. And so there, we talk about the indication for males, as well, because they have the higher rates of head and neck cancers later on in life. And I like to say to my patients, "Listen, this is prevention. When your children are younger, or even your older teens, and young adults, all the way up to 26, they really should get this vaccine, because what happens is you're doing your prevention now, then as adults, they get disease, and then as they're older, they can potentially get cancer, so this is a big prevention."

Dr. Domino:

Now, this is a great change, but many of our patients already have had one, or maybe, even two doses of the older vaccine, what's the advice there?

Jill Terrien:

What they say is, "Continue on with the newer vaccine." So if you've had one dose of the 4-valent vaccine, which is pretty much been what's been around up to this point, and they've had one dose, you then get the second dose with the 9-valent vaccine. There is no problem with that.

Dr. Domino:

That's great. Well, to summarize then, the new CDC recommendations regarding HPV vaccine, are to give two doses six months apart for children aged 11 through 15 and you can even start as early as nine. For those 15 and older, use three doses at zero, one, and six months. Any final thoughts on how you counsel parents and young adults with regard to the vaccine?

Jill Terrien:

Yes, I think it's a... It's always how we make decisions with our patients. It's a shared decision making process. They want to know... They usually want to know three things. Is this safe? Is it going to hurt my child? And what would you recommend? Because, as a provider, they look to you for your sage advice. And so I think it's dispelling any myths, and just moving forward about what a benefit this is for your child.

Dr. Domino:

Jill, I think that's terrific. This is one of our two cancer preventing vaccines that we have. There are very, very few things that we can give in such short times that prevents cancer. So I appreciate you bringing this forward today. It's truly going to change how we practice, it's going to save money, and probably increase the rate of immunizations of our children throughout the rest of their lives.

Jill Terrien:

Thank you, Frank.

Dr. Domino:

Practice pointer: Giving two doses of the HPV vaccine at zero and six months, to children 11 through 15, is just as efficacious as three. Join us next time, when we review the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations regarding the introduction of juice for children in adolescence.