



ARCHDIOCESE
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The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

Office of Catholic Schools

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**Statement for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Regarding the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine**

Indiana Code 20-34-4-3 requires the Indiana State Department of Health to provide information on the link between cancer and the human papillomavirus (HPV) and the vaccination that can protect your child from HPV related cancers later in life. This information is to be provided to all parents of students entering grade six.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Office of Catholic Schools and the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) appreciate the seriousness of healthcare issues involved with the human papillomavirus (HPV) infection and we are pleased that the Indiana General Assembly has recognized parents as the primary educators of their child/children. As is stated in the law, the decision to vaccinate (or not to vaccinate) your child/children is seen as a parent's decision and responsibility.

To make good decisions, parents and young women/men need accurate information regarding the vaccines available. Currently there are two Gardasil vaccines that have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Gardasil protects against four strains of HPV while Gardasil 9 protects against an additional 5 strains. These vaccines protect against two strains of HPV that are responsible for 70 percent of cervical cancer. The vaccines also protect against two strains of the virus that cause 90 percent of genital warts. When administered near the age of sixth graders, it is known the vaccine produces a better immune response. However, the vaccines are not a panacea. Parents and their children must also realize the following about the vaccines:

- The vaccine will not prevent the transmission of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or other sexually transmitted diseases;
- The vaccines will not prevent infections from other strains of HPV;
- The vaccine will not prevent infections from all HPV strains that cause cervical cancer;
- The vaccine will not eliminate the need for regular screening.

The Church teaches that a primary role of Catholic educators is to provide assistance to parents in understanding the teachings of our Catholic faith so that they can form their children in the Faith. To this end, parents should know that there is no moral objection to the vaccine itself and the prevalence of HPV in the reproductive age population makes the possibility of exposure to the virus significant. (Source: National Catholic Bioethics Center).

Whether you choose to vaccinate your daughter/son or not, please use this opportunity to speak with your child/children about God's plan for each of us as sexual beings. Talk with child/children and emphasize that the most effective way to avoid contracting any sexually transmitted disease is to abstain from sexual activity before marriage and to remain faithful within marriage. Share with your child/children that sex is sacred and is beautiful within the context of marriage. We believe that parents can and will make prudent decisions when provided with full and accurate information.

Gina Kuntz Fleming

Superintendent of Catholic Schools

References available at: www.archindy.org/occe/, Member Area/Downloads
National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC)
Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHAUSA)