

October 15, 2014

Dear Parent:

This letter is to inform you of a change to the HPV (Human Papillomavirus) immunization program for school-age girls in BC. **Starting October 20th, 2014, girls in grade 9 will no longer receive a third dose of the HPV vaccine if their prior 2 doses were given 6 months apart.** . Your daughter may therefore not receive the third dose even if you have already signed the consent for its receipt.

There is now considerable evidence from a variety of studies that that at younger ages, 2 doses provide as much protection as 3 doses. As a result, several expert bodies including the World Health Organization and European Medicines Agency, as well as programs in several other countries have recently adopted a two dose HPV schedule. The Canadian National Advisory Committee on Immunization has recommended a 2 dose schedule for those starting their series prior to the 15th birthday.

Please refer to the following question and answers for further information:

Why is this change being made part way through the school year?

BC is committed to providing an immunization program that is based on the most recent scientific evidence and ensuring that provincial vaccine recommendations are in line with national and international recommendations. Given the mounting evidence from several research studies and national advisory committee recommendation changes, the BC public health committee that recommends on immunization policy decided that it was best to act on these recommendations as soon as possible.

What if my daughter has already received 3 doses of HPV vaccine? Is this safe?

Yes, the recommendations made state that either a 2 dose or a 3 dose series of HPV vaccine may be given in younger girls; both are are very safe and effective.

What if my daughter has only had one dose of HPV vaccine or the two doses were given less than 6 months apart?

Please contact your local public health unit to make arrangements to have your daughter's immunization record reviewed. The public health nurse will tell you if your daughter requires any additional doses of the HPV vaccine.

What if my daughter has never received the HPV vaccine?

HPV vaccine is very safe and effective and has been proven to prevent cervical cancer and genital warts. It is never too late for your daughter to receive the HPV vaccine. Girls who receive the first dose of HPV vaccine after their 15th birthday will still require 3 doses to be fully protected.